



PRESCHOOL DEVELOPMENT GRANT B-5 NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Phase 2 Family Listening Session Full Report

**Hearing from Oregon's Families
About Child Care Needs**

**Report to the Oregon Early Learning Division
and the Early Learning Council**

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- ▶ Bienestar
- ▶ Bridging Communities
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- ▶ Coos Health & Wellness and the CaCoon Program
- ▶ Doulas Latinas
- ▶ Frontier Early Learning Hub
- ▶ Humanitarian Assistance with Kindness & Interculturalism (HAKI)
- ▶ Latino Network
- ▶ Northwest Regional Early Learning Hub
- ▶ Oregon Community Development Coalition (Chiloquin, Gresham, and Madras)
- ▶ Seaside Head Start and the Lower Columbia Hispanic Council
- ▶ South Central Early Learning Hub

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Introduction & Background

Project Overview

The Preschool Development Grant (PDG) was a one-year federal planning grant awarded to the Oregon Early Learning Division (ELD) in 2019. As part of the PDG project, the ELD contracted with Portland State University (PSU) and OSLC Developments, Inc. (ODI) to conduct a statewide needs assessment to inform planning for expansion and improvement of Oregon's early learning system. A key part of the needs assessment was to engage broader family voices in helping to inform early learning priorities. To do this, the PDG research team partnered with community organizations to gather culturally specific community feedback about the early care and education needs of families in Oregon through a series of family listening sessions. This work was designed to engage community-based organizations (CBOs) as partners with the research team in shaping the questions asked, the approaches used to engage and invite families, and in providing input on final community-specific reports. All reports were provided back to the partnering organizations to share with families in their communities. In the case where listening sessions were conducted in a language other than English, reports were translated into the appropriate language to ensure accessibility to family participants.



Planning, Input, and Oversight

The PDG research team worked with two advisory groups to define the focus and priorities for family listening sessions: (1) the Strengths and Needs Assessment Advisory Committee, a group comprised of state agency representatives, local early learning leaders, and stakeholders from key community organizations; and (2) the Family Voices Working Group, a smaller group comprised of staff from culturally specific organizations, Early Learning Hubs, and programs serving large populations of culturally/linguistically diverse and/or geographically isolated families. Planning and design work included: (1) obtaining input from these Advisory groups at multiple points along the way to inform final decisions about communities of focus, priority questions, and methodology for engaging community partners; (2) compiling and reviewing existing reports from prior community/family listening sessions focused on understanding families' experiences with and needs for early learning and parenting support; and (3) engaging a culturally specific evaluation consultant, AB Cultural Drivers, to co-design the work with the PDG research team. A list of the reports compiled is included in Appendix A. Based on information collected through prior research and input from the two advisory groups, a number of priority populations were identified. We were able to include the following in this project: the priority populations for this project¹ were identified as:

1. Rural families outside the I-5 corridor
2. American Indian/Native American families
3. Latino/a/x families, especially those living in rural communities
4. Other non-represented refugee/immigrant communities
5. Families with children with special needs
6. Incarcerated mothers
7. Working families in poverty

¹ Other priority areas identified, but which we were not able to systematically include (a few members of these groups were included in some listening session): families with children involved in child welfare, tribal families, urban American Indian families, and military families.

Approach to Listening Sessions

Engaging Community Based Organizations

To identify community organizations that were interested in working with us to conduct listening sessions, we sent information through the email networks of Early Learning Hubs and other key early learning networks requesting suggestions for agencies serving the prioritized populations. A total of 62 different agencies were recommended, representing a wide variety of organizations serving families with young children across the state. These agencies then received information about the project and about the possible structures for partnering with the PDG team to conduct the listening sessions. We then met with interested organizations (in person or by telephone) that expressed interest to discuss the project needs and potential role for the partner organization. We provided three different options for partner programs, depending on their interest and capacity for conducting the listening session. Option 1 provided a stipend to the organization of \$7500 and asked for a higher level of organizational effort in doing outreach, engagement, and facilitation of the listening session. Option 2

included a \$5000 stipend, with somewhat fewer agency responsibilities; and Option 3, with a \$3000 stipend, requested partnership in facilitating outreach and providing input, but left most logistical work with the PDG research team. Most organizations opted for Option 1 or Option 2. All organizations were also provided with a hospitality budget of \$600 to cover food, child care, and other costs. We met at least twice with each partnering organization to clarify and define roles related to the following steps in the process.

All family participants in listening sessions were given a \$40 gift card to Target or Walmart. Listening sessions were facilitated in the languages appropriate for the community, and reports were translated into these languages to be shared with participants. Nine sessions were conducted in Spanish and one in Swahili. The only criteria for participation was that families have at least one child under the age of 5 years.



Table 1. Family listening session host organizations and participant characteristics

Partnering Organization	# of Participants	Participant Characteristics	Location
Bienestar	18	Spanish, Latino/a/x/Hispanic, Subsidized Housing	Scappoose, Forest Grove
Bridging Communities	10	English, White, Parents of Children with Disabilities	Medford
Coos Health & Wellness	9	English, White, Latino/a/x; Parents of Children with Health Needs	Coos & Curry Counties
Douglas Latinas	24	Spanish, Latino/a/x/Hispanic, Migrant	Hillsboro, Woodburn
Frontier Early Learning Hub	8	English, White, Frontier	Burns, Hines
Humanitarian Assistance with Kindness & Interculturalism (HAKI)	13	Swahili	Portland Metro
Latino Network	18	Spanish, Latino/a/x/Hispanic, Migrant	Gresham, Tualatin
South Central Early Learning Hub	5	English, White, Frontier	Residents of Lakeview
NW Regional Early Learning Hub	11	English, White, Rural/Coast	NW Coast (Clatskanie, Scappoose)
Oregon Community Development Coalition (OCDC)	16	English and Spanish, Latino/a/x/Hispanic, Klamath Tribe	Chiloquin, Madras
OCDC Gresham	11	English and Spanish, American Indian, Latino/a/x/Hispanic	Gresham
Community Action of Washington County and Coffee Creek Head Start and Early Head Start	3 Staff	English, Incarcerated Mothers	Coffee Creek
Seaside Head Start and Lower Columbia Hispanic Council	5	Latino/a/x, Spanish Speaking, Rural/Coast	Seaside
Total	151		

Table 1 lists the partner organizations, number of listening sessions held for each organization, language used in facilitating the listening session, location of program, and number of participants per session. The majority of participants were biological parents, mothers in particular, as well as fathers, uncles, and grandmothers.

A smaller number of adoptive, foster, and other nonrelative caregivers also participated. Three staff from Coffee Creek Correctional were interviewed as liaisons to women who were currently incarcerated or on parole. The terms “family member”, “participant”, and “caregiver” are used interchangeably in this report.

Key Findings

We offer the following synthesis of key findings from across the listening sessions, noting that this summary does not do justice to the complex, nuanced, and detailed stories that families shared with us. We urge program planners, policy makers, and others who are working to improve Oregon's early learning system to read each of the individual session reports included in the *PDG B-5 Needs Assessment Phase 2 Family Listening Session Full Report* to gain a more complete, complex, and authentic understanding of what caregivers' experiences have been, and what their hopes and dreams are for how the early learning system can support their families to succeed and thrive.

Current Child Care Experiences Building School Readiness

Family Experiences and Hopes for School Readiness Supports

One of the most consistent themes expressed throughout the listening sessions was a common perspective among caregivers that school readiness matters and that participants wanted their children to have early learning experiences that could help them be ready and successful in school. Participants agreed that child care programs should cultivate early math and literacy skills such as learning letters, numbers, colors, and shapes; however, participants were even more likely to highlight the importance of early learning experiences for helping children gain the social-emotional skills needed to successfully transition into kindergarten. Examples of benefits they had perceived for their children in this area included overcoming shyness and separation anxiety, learning to adjust to school structures and routines, learning to work in groups and play well with other children, and to respect adults by following directions.

Participants whose children were participating in more formal early learning programs (described as "licensed", "preschools", and/or "centers") described a number of ways that their early learning providers were helping children build school readiness skills, including:

- ▶ **Education:** learning colors, letters, how to write their name, English language, science and math

- ▶ **Social-Emotional Skills:** building confidence, supporting positive peer interactions (sharing, taking turns, respect, empathy for others), having opportunities to play with other children and make friends, learning how to communicate needs and how to recognize and interpret emotions
- ▶ **Self-Care and Other Responsibilities:** learning to listen to a teacher, learning a routine, going to the bathroom alone, picking up after a meal, picking up toys after play

"Because they are developing more and they're having more confidence with the teachers and with other children, they are not embarrassed, they are not insecure and so that in the future they will have a career and learn a little bit of everything."

—Spanish-speaking participant

While many participants described these types of early supports for school readiness, a number also shared their concerns that some caregivers (often described as "unlicensed" or "babysitters") did not engage their children in learning activities to prepare them for school. Some expressed that their children were spending too much time watching television and playing games on electronic devices. Participants living in rural areas, in particular, noted that the lack of options for child care led them to compromise what they might ideally want for their child in terms of an early learning setting to ensure that child care of any type could be secured.

"Sometimes we turn to the neighbors or a friend because we can't afford quality of care, like a child care center. You see the difference when you take the kids to a child care center versus when they are cared for by a family member, a neighbor or a friend." —Rural participant

"The difficult part for me is after school, because I take her to care and I feel there is no routine or dedication there...At the moment my neighbor watches her and I sometimes come back and find them watching television" —Latino/a/x parent

At least one family in almost every listening session also mentioned the value of experienced child care providers who helped to identify children with special needs prior to kindergarten entry. While families did not specifically characterize this as building "school readiness", it was clearly an important role played by early learning providers.

“When I started bringing [my son] here is when we realized that he had autism. And that’s something if I had not brought him here I wouldn’t have found out. They told me where I needed to go. They said that now he was talking much more than before. Before he didn’t talk at all. Last year and this year he has been [at OCDC], and he has learned a lot.” –Urban American Indian participant

Preparing Families to Support Children’s Transitions to School

While caregivers shared some examples of early learning providers helping to prepare adult caregivers for their children’s transition, these were far less frequently reported than direct supports provided to the children. Some of the things described included guidance and information about how to support children’s learning at home, specifically things to do to help children achieve particular learning or behavioral goals, and guidance to help family members understand and navigate the school system (e.g., explaining the purpose of parent-teacher conferences, supporting the completion of kindergarten applications).

“We really want that. We want our kids to be ready. It’s hard enough in the school systems, and we really need to figure out how to help our kids be ready for that.”

–Latino/a/x mom

A number of participants did not expect their early learning provider to help parents to better understand how to support children’s learning and/or transition. That said, when asked what would be helpful in this area, they offered a number of recommendations for additional supports that they felt would help prepare their children for school, including:

- ▶ Information about school expectations for children and family members
- ▶ Guidance on how to communicate with teachers
- ▶ Information about the transition process
- ▶ Information about developmental stages for children and what is “typical”
- ▶ Help setting routines with children to be ready for school
- ▶ More activities family members can do to help children learn academic and social skills at home



Current Experiences with Culturally Specific and Culturally-Responsive Care

Family members who were Black, indigenous, or other persons of color (BIPOC) discussed issues of language and culture in relation to their children’s child care experiences. These families primarily included Latino/a/x families, as well as American Indian (specifically, members of the Klamath tribe), East African immigrants, and multiracial families. Activities to support Latino/a/x children’s cultural traditions were infrequent at most sites, beyond occasionally serving or preparing culturally specific foods and celebrating some holidays, such as the Day of the Dead. One Head Start program in Central Oregon was an exception, which, in addition to holding an ‘All Around the World’ event with music in English and Spanish, food from different cultures was provided to children regularly, teachers spoke English and Spanish, and each classroom was decorated with different cultural pictures. This was one example of a more comprehensive integration of culturally specific materials throughout children’s early learning setting and experiences. This program was recognized for having books, pictures, and other materials in the classroom that reflected children’s racial/ethnic heritage.

“We made [tribal stories] into CD’s and the Head Start teachers implement those in class...I think that’s really important because our children know who they are and where they come from.” –member, Klamath tribe

Spanish-speaking families clearly and emphatically shared two competing desires and hopes about their children's exposure to language: First, many expressed a keen value for children retaining their native Spanish language. Second, there was a clear concern that without dual language supports, children would not adequately learn English to be ready for school. These families also shared their perception that home-based care, a frequently-used option for many of these families, was often provided by family, friends, and/or neighbors who were primarily monolingual Spanish speakers and were concerned about these children's ability to acquire English in particular. Many Latino/a/x family members expressed a desire for center-based preschool and early learning supports for their children.



“We are already losing much of our culture. It’s true that we speak Spanish, but the reality is that English really is the focus...the little that we are able to teach stays at home.” –Spanish-speaking participant

What Does Ideal Child Care Look Like to Families?

In each listening session, caregivers were invited to share their vision for an ideal child care situation for their child(ren). Across sessions, participants described holistic programs offering well-rounded curricula spanning academics, arts and crafts, physical fitness and sports, and culturally/linguistically specific programming. They also emphasized the importance of having children spend time in quality early learning settings in supporting social-emotional development garnered through positive interactions with peers and providers.

“It is very important for our children to learn in a group...to socialize, to spend time together, to learn to share with other children...the children do not go to school scared, because they know what they are going to be taught.” –Latino/a/x participant

With regard to respondent subgroups, American Indian caregivers in one site described having more programs offering nature studies, origin stories, first food traditions (i.e., deer, elk, and salmon), and (in this case) Klamath language instruction. Latino/a/x participants, in addition to wanting dual-language programs with a strong focus on preparing children for entry into formal school systems, were especially interested in a diverse array of fitness opportunities including rock climbing, skateboarding, swimming, and gymnastics in addition to traditional offerings like soccer and basketball. It also appeared that caregivers in more geographically isolated areas were somewhat more likely to emphasize the importance of providers who would teach etiquette and manners, such as how to eat properly with utensils and knowing the difference between inside and outside voices. Many Latino/a/x families also described their desire to make sure that early learning providers were giving healthy meals and snacks to children. Finally, one Eastern African participant describing the difference it made to their family to have a teacher in her child's class who shared their culture:

“Like right now, my [youngest child] and has someone from our community as the teacher. If he does something bad that teacher is going to come and tell me hey, this is what’s going on...She will care because she knows him personally...She’s not going to say your child is bad, she’s going to say how can we work together to settle this...We work together, we understand where we come from...” –HAKI participant

Generally, however, while many families expressed a preference for group-based care, East African immigrants—geographically isolated—and a subset of Latino/a/x caregivers reported that they would prefer to take care of their children themselves if their life circumstances allowed. This was often talked about in the context of negative experiences families had with child care providers, as well as more general mistrust of the quality and type of care available to them. One of these participants talked about the importance of dual-language programs so that children can build skills for transitioning from one language to another. Another parent said that they would like to see more understanding and adaptation of what is taught in early learning to better reflect their religion. They reported that sometimes schools teach children things that go against their faith-based beliefs. That said,

East African immigrant participants shared that they would like a culturally specific classroom or early learning program in their own community.

Preferred Locations and Times for Child Care

The lives of parents with young children are diverse and dynamic. As such, the times they would like to have child care available varied widely in terms of hours, days, and level of flexibility, although participants almost overwhelmingly described their need for full-day, full-week care—but family work weeks and schedules varied tremendously. Participants in each dialogue session were interested in a traditional Monday through Friday daytime schedule, but this was one of many options discussed. Alternatives included half-day sessions in the morning and afternoon, evening and weekend offerings for caregivers with nontraditional work schedules, and abbreviated schedules such as two days a week, once a week, and twice a month. Flexible drop-in programs were also mentioned, as well as year-round programming and trustworthy options for care when center-based facilities may be closed for staff training or weather.

“If you work in the field, you start at 7:30am. So you would drop [your children] off at 6:30am and would pick them up at 4:00pm.” –Latino/a/x participant

“...on Spring break and summer time, our kids don’t have anything. If you live right in [town] it’s really hard and I’m sure living outside of [town] is hard too. Like there’s no program to take your kid or have somebody take your kid to the library, you know like when you’re in a city. You can hire somebody to take your kid to the library for story time and have a full day of stuff. We don’t have those options here.” –Rural participant

Participants almost universally voiced the desire for programs to be conveniently located close to home or work. Participants in geographically isolated communities suggested co-locating child care with other family services such as DHS, Head Start, or behavioral health providers. Latino/a/x caregivers specifically mentioned a desire for their children to have access to the outdoors while in care, such as located near a park or with an outdoor play area. Many preferred to walk their children to child care. If travel is needed, participants expressed that access to transportation, such as a bus to pick up children along a scheduled route, would be helpful.

Finding Quality Care and Family Decision Making

The caregivers interviewed were both creative and diligent in their efforts to find appropriate care for their children. Sources of information included calling 211, searching the internet including

the state licensing website and social media websites, and confering with DHS caseworkers. However, the source most commonly mentioned and most trusted was word-of-mouth recommendations made by friends, family members, and coworkers. Ultimately, these personal referrals were seen as more likely to result in finding a caregiver that family members felt they could trust.

“More than anything else, we get information among ourselves as a community, and then [I] make a decision from there.” –Latino/a/x participant

At the same time, families expressed keen interest in being able to find out other kinds of information (e.g., about quality ratings, licensure status, past families’ experiences) but had little idea how to get this information.

“At first I tried the resources they tell you to use, DHS and 211 and I asked all the questions they tell you to ask. But I realized after so many calls that I couldn’t afford those child care centers. [The information] didn’t prepare me for reality.” This mom chose an in-home child care situation for her daughter, but after talking with the provider about her concerns around her son watching television, she found that the provider no longer wanted to care for him. “So, I stopped asking those questions and when I took my last job I used references.”
–Rural participant

One Latino/a/x parent mentioned that announcements on Spanish language radio stations would be helpful, to learn about available options. Another suggested that a website should organize information in one place, such as a clearinghouse, since posting flyers in the community is an unreliable method to disseminate information about available programs. According to Head Start staff working at the Coffee Creek Correctional facility, mothers receiving Head Start services while incarcerated tend to seek similar programs once released, mainly due to a lack of knowledge about the diversity of options available to them.

Information Needed for Decision Making

As discussed in the listening sessions, affordability, availability, and safety are paramount when caregivers are looking for child care options. Participants shared a number of things that they felt were helpful (or would be helpful) to them in order to feel they had the information they need to make a good decision about child care. Key among these were meeting and observing providers, touring facilities, and providers having clear “Open Door” policies (e.g., knowing that parents can volunteer in the classroom and are welcome to visit).

Many participants, especially those living in geographically isolated locations, described taking additional measures to ensure their children would be kept from harm. Examples included conducting provider background checks and requesting drug tests and references. Aspects of the physical location were also discussed, including cleanliness, sites free of drowning hazards (e.g., swimming pool), and “appropriate” bathroom facilities.

Caregivers mentioned numerous other qualities they would consider in decision making, which are listed below.

- ▶ Realistic staff-to-child ratios
- ▶ Adequate supervision to ensure safety
- ▶ Nutritious meals that include fruits and vegetables
- ▶ Time for children to play outside each day
- ▶ Respectful, kind provider interactions with children and caregivers
- ▶ Shared cultural beliefs and backgrounds
- ▶ Common approach to discipline

Challenges Accessing Early Learning Programs

In addition to discussing their ideal child care scenarios, the dialogue sessions gathered a wealth of information about the challenges caregivers experience navigating their current circumstances. Across the board, BIPOC families described challenges in finding linguistically and culturally specific and/or responsive providers for their children. In addition, all groups highlighted three other central, and clearly interrelated, challenges for parents: Cost, availability/access, and quality. These four challenges are described below.

Lack of Culturally and/or Linguistically Specific Early Learning Providers

Across the board, BIPOC families shared the difficulties they faced in trying to find culturally and linguistically specific or responsive providers for their children.

“When he went to the last preschool (where he will never go to again), they only focused on White/Caucasian. Like the posters are only white people. A lot of the things in the classroom are focused on White. In the books: White kids.” –Multiracial participant

Among Latino/a/x caregivers, having providers who speak the families’ home language was clearly important, but options were seen as quite limited. Participants described some of the chal-

lenges related to having monolingual English teachers/providers for both children and adults. For example, participants described that in cases where providers do not speak Spanish (or the child’s home language), children struggle to communicate in English. Language barriers were also described as getting in the way of parents’ ability to communicate their children’s needs to providers, and of providers’ ability to talk with parents about their children’s progress in care. Moreover, mothers speaking indigenous languages (Mixteco, Zapoteco, Chuj) could not find providers who spoke their dialect, making it hard for children to learn or want to speak their home language.

“There is only one teacher there that speaks Spanish. She is only there once a week, sometimes just for a little while, sometimes all day...Sometimes it is difficult for my son to communicate because he doesn’t speak much English but now that he is going to school he is learning a lot.” –Spanish-speaking parent

East African immigrants had the most difficulty acclimating to provider contexts anchored in the dominant western culture, and they expressed the most reluctance to place their young children in early learning settings that were outside their home and, therefore, cultural community. In their experience, “American” teachers lack cross-cultural understanding, which manifests in their communication with participants and understanding of family context and children’s behavior. These families tended to prefer to care for their children at home or in the community and described culturally specific means of educating their children. Family members or community members speak Somali or Swahili to children and tell stories and sing songs in Swahili so they do not lose their home language. They also practice Muslim traditions such as washing after children get home from school, reading the Quran, and teaching children how to pray. A major consideration for these family members was a sense that their cultural ways of parenting were not only misunderstood but perceived negatively by outsiders. Some mentioned concerns and experiences with DHS/Child Welfare reports being made based on early learning providers’ lack of cross-cultural understanding and ability to communicate with families.

“We mostly keep our young kids at home since we don’t trust. We would just rather have family members watch the little ones.” –East African participant

Cost is Prohibitive

Across all of the sessions, the barrier caregivers lamented most consistently and frequently was the high cost of quality child care, sharing a variety of negative impacts on their ability to work, daily lifestyles, and emotional wellbeing. Especially for parents with

multiple children, the combined costs of child care were seen as exceedingly prohibitive. One Latino/a/x caregiver suggested that it would be helpful for providers to offer volunteer opportunities for parents who could then have their children receive services for a reduced cost.

“Probably the number one barrier for receiving quality child care; being able to afford it.” –Rural participant

“I’d like to leave him at a daycare, but I started to check daycare prices and it was too expensive, even for a few hours, so I made the decision to stay home with him...I’m just going to wait for him to go to school, this next year he’s going to school.” –Latino/a/x participant

A majority of the participants we spoke with talked about the ways that the lack of affordable child care impacted their ability to work. Caregivers reported quitting work, turning down work, or not seeking employment because of the cost of care or the lack of available care during the times/days needed. children Participants in each group discussed the trade-offs between working low-wage positions and staying home with their children.

“Oh yes, I’ve left work, I was paying \$34 a day (for babysitter), I worked only 6 hours and I was earning only \$12 an hour, it wasn’t worth it.” –Latino/a/x participant

“It wasn’t worth it to miss out on my child’s growing up for a few hundred dollars after paying out [for child care].” –Rural participant

A commonly shared scenario was that parents literally added up how much they were making through their work, compared the value to how much child care would cost, and found the cost of care exceeded what they could make in paid employment. In many cases, they would have owed money on top of what their paycheck in order to have their children in care. This poor financial payoff was not compelling when combined with the added loss of time spent with their children during their early years.

“For some of the daycares in town if we had both kids in care it would almost be \$1000 a month so it’d be pointless for me to work if I’m going to be paying for daycare because I’d be working to pay for daycare. So I’d rather stay home with my kids if I’m going to be paying that much. \$200 a month would be reasonable. It’d be very hard for me to go to work and have someone else taking care of my kids all day and I’m not raising them...just to have them go to daycare so it’d have to be pretty cheap because it’s hard to go to work just to pay for that.” –Rural participant



“I stopped working for that reason, because Monday to Friday I was going to have to pay for four [children]. I thought it better to stay at home” –Latino/a/x participant

Other participants described reducing their hours or rearranging work schedules to care for their children. One parent’s compromise was to not see her children for days at a stretch because she worked odd hours. The child care provider would not watch the children at their home so the parent did not get to see her children between school, sleeping, and her work hours for sometimes days at a time. Another reported working opposite shifts with his partner to cover the costs, which had stressed their relationship. In addition, one parent reported that she could not go to work to cover the cost of child care because the added income would cause her family to lose their OHP coverage. Others who opted to stay home with their children full time experienced negative emotional effects including social isolation and depression.

“I would like to work, but I cannot apply for public care [for my youngest child], and I cannot pay for the \$1200 a month for the youngest to go to care...Since staying home, I have been depressed, but \$1200 is way too much.” –Rural participant

For some families these challenges were even more formidable and could have profound negative impacts. For example, A Head Start provider working in corrections noted that insurmountable child care costs play a role in recidivism. Mothers struggle to gain employment due to their criminal background. Once secured, they often work evenings and weekends. Combined, these factors severely limit choice and ability to access care.

"It's almost like they [women on parole] should be given a state voucher (for child care)... as they parole. 'Cause that's a barrier to them getting on their feet, and we know that women are facing multiple stressors, and if we're talking about staying in sobriety and out of criminality...if we're really serious about recidivism, how can we get people back on their feet?"

–Coffee Creek participant

A number of participants viewed Head Start as the best (affordable) option, but many were not able to access the service due to waitlists or because they exceeded income requirements. When selecting from the remaining alternatives, participants indicated that licensed facilities are preferable. Such options tend to be more expensive than unlicensed options, and some participants related that licensure was not a guarantee of quality care. These participants clearly understood the reality that subsidized or publicly funded child care programs often have waitlists, while unsubsidized/private programs tend to be more expensive, especially if the provider is licensed.

"Unfortunately, subsidized child care programs often have waitlists, while unsubsidized programs tend to be more expensive, especially if the provider is licensed..." –Latino/a/x participant

I've tried three years to get him into daycare here and there's a waiting list and at the time I was working night shift so it didn't even help out. So now I'm working in the mornings and I've been trying to get him in daycare, still." –Rural participant

"It's so hard to find anybody for child care. There's a lot of providers here that are not licensed because it's too hard for them to get licensed." –Rural participant

Access Challenges: Availability and Transportation

In addition to cost, availability of child care was discussed in most sessions as a serious limitation of the current provider system. While this was a challenge across all of the dialogue sessions, it was perhaps most strongly articulated by families living in rural and frontier areas of the state. In other cases, for families working lower-paying service industry jobs, or working as farm or migrant laborers, child care was not available at the times it was needed to accommodate these participants' work schedules.

"I think we need more people who actually are qualified to step up and do child care. 'Cause there is a lack of child care in this county. I've lived in Sacramento, I've lived in Klamath Falls and this place...there's not enough child care for poor people that are trying to go back to work. That's the hardest part is trying to actually find people..." –Rural participant

This challenge was also discussed among American Indian and Latino/a/x caregivers, as well as staff working with incarcerated mothers. Comments highlighted lack of access to culturally supportive/inclusive care, waitlists for low-cost options, and the strain caused by constantly juggling coverage among family caregivers.

"I work full-time and their dad works seasonal so right now they stay home with dad when they're not at school. When he goes back to work, I have no idea what I'm going to do with them. And I'll have three, I have another one on the way. I might have to stay home with the kids because I don't have child care." –Latino/a/x participant

Transportation was also raised as a challenge for caregivers who must travel to take their children to child care. In geographically isolated communities, participants described traveling long distances on treacherous roads to locations that are not close to either their home or their workplace. Among Latino/a/x participants, caregivers talked about how driving children to care placed unlicensed caregivers in additional danger due to fears of being pulled over and deported.

"Many people are able to drive but they don't have a license so there is a risk involved...even if they want to take them, the bus might be safer." –Latino/a/x participant

Among incarcerated mothers whose children travel to the correctional facility to receive Head Start services, participation hinges on the availability of family members to bring children to the site. In addition to burdening already strained families, this approach results in unreliable attendance in programming. Requests for bus transportation were universal among dialogue session participants traveling to reach child care.

Low Quality Child Care: Lack of Trust, Experiences of Discrimination, and Safety Concerns

The final key theme focused on caregivers' reservations about care quality and child safety, an issue that emerged across all listening sessions, although their perspectives differed somewhat from group to group. Participants across all groups talked about the importance of trust. Many shared negative experiences with child care, as well as specific experiences of social, racial, and/or linguistic discrimination that increased mistrust.

“We don’t have reliable care here. We don’t have anybody we can trust. I think that’s real.”

–Latino/a/x participant

Latino/a/x participants discussed a variety of issues including the lack of learning activities, disrespectful staff, and large class sizes. They also expressed worry about child maltreatment, based on lived experience with harmful provider actions including withholding food, leaving children in diapers, and locking children in the closet as a form of discipline.

“I asked my son why he was crying and he didn’t want to tell me. The next day I asked him again. He told me that she [child care provider] was scolding the kids she watches and in order to punish them she would stick them in the closet.” –Spanish-speaking participant

“I used to work hard and cook for my children every day. I noticed that my children were losing a lot of weight, the provider didn’t feed them the food I left for them, did not change their diapers, nor their clothes. I would provide everything to the babysitter to take care of them...One day, I left work early and went to pick up my children before the normal time and caught the provider eating the food that I had taken to my children that day...I took my children with me, the diapers and left the babysitter’s house upset, but I didn’t say anything.” –Latino/a/x participant

Among East African immigrants, a general mistrust for providers outside of their culture and community was a central concern, in addition to their observation that child care environments were often misaligned with their home culture and traditions.

“We mostly keep our young kids at home since we don’t trust. We would just rather have family members watch the little ones.” –East African participant

One caregiver spoke at length about the discrimination they had experienced from a teacher. Cultural misunderstandings and poor parent-teacher communication were also discussed. For example, one teacher gave an East African immigrant child a pair of shoes. The child’s mother was angered that she was not given the opportunity to choose whether her child should have them and felt that the teacher had assumed the family was poor because they were served by Head Start.

“I took [child] to the hospital, they told me it was broken. I assumed he didn’t tell anybody because I didn’t get a call, I didn’t get an email, I didn’t get anything. He was like, “Yeah, I told the teacher that my arm was hurting and she told me to go and sit down at my desk.”...What really made me furious and angry was, my child has a good friend who goes to school together...they are Caucasian and I kind of talked to her [the mom] about it. And she was like, ‘She [the teacher] emails me every time my little girl gets a paper cut.’...That was kind of like, okay, now I felt that discrimination.”

–East African participant

“A lot of parents are scared if there’s an American home visitor. Especially since they are scared of them calling DHS. It’s hard to trust somebody who’s outside of the community to come to your house or when you open your doors for people. The whole family or the kids may be taken away. Even if a child falls or gets hurt, they might blame the parents. The trust is an issue.”

–East African participant

Geographically isolated caregivers also expressed mistrust of providers. One mother said that the horror stories from the internet, television, and word of mouth about children being harmed in care drove her decision to stay at home with her children. Another caregiver pulled her child out of care after her son was injured and the provider did not alert her until pickup at the end of the day. Geographically isolated caregivers also perceived unlicensed programs as unsafe, and frequently talked about their need to compromise some elements of what they felt would be best for their children just to have someone they could trust.

“We are so starved for someone we can trust to watch our kid to get us through the day, we haven’t even thought about the rest of it...until they get to preschool.” –Rural participant

“It’s hard to trust someone that you don’t know super personally. I don’t think I could just drop my kids off at somebody’s house. Even if they are through DHS or whatever.” –Rural participant

Children with Special Needs

Some of the listening sessions specifically solicited feedback from family members caring for children with disabilities or special health care needs. Similar to other groups, these participants reported privileging affordability, availability, and safety when considering child care options, but expressed particularly concerns and difficulties finding child care providers who were adequately trained or experienced to support their children with special needs, which included such things as ADHD, Down's Syndrome, autism, hearing impairment, diabetes, and other chronic health conditions. Moreover, once placed, multiple caregivers shared that they had been asked to remove their child from care due to the provider's inability to support the child's needs.

"They said they could no longer handle his needs and he was being removed from the program, and we were just left with no care and both of us working."

—Rural parent of child with special needs

Faced with a dearth of providers with adequate training, participants reported needing multiple, complex arrangements needs. Information and referrals provided by other parents with children with disabilities were seen as a helpful resource for finding appropriate care, as well as the assistance of some community based organization.

"I couldn't leave him with family because nobody understood because of this invisible disability he has. They just think he's being a bad child and he's not. I had to go against my better judgement and have someone I didn't know to watch my children while I was in the hospital." —Rural parent of child with special needs

A particular challenge expressed among participants in this group related to EI/ECSE services. Due to very limited availability of such services, participants expressed their strong desire to connect with qualified providers who would allow them to have EI/ECSE services in tandem or within child care, or who could provide care around EI/ECSE service days. Participants also discussed the reactive nature of the service system. One example offered during the session focused on needing to request particular services for a child, rather than service coordinators offering the full menu of services available to them. These participants also made a more general request for help identifying available supports and navigating service systems for children with special needs.

"We also have EI/ECSE, but they only accept him for 2 hours 2 days a week. Now, I can't go and work if I have to take him to school at 1:45 and pick him up at 3:45. My husband and I have to have full-time jobs to pay our bills. We can't find another placement for our special needs child that works with his special education ECSE—so, I guess that's what we need."

—Rural parent of child with special needs

"But it's something I find really interesting with the system is that they know that they can provide—the service coordinators know that they can provide this [service]—but they can't tell the parents that they can provide it unless the parents ask for it. But the parents don't ask for it because they don't know it exists and they don't know that they can ask for it. So, as soon as one parent tells another parent, 'Oh, I get this service', it's like, 'Oh, moms are talkin'!'...However, if you don't know to say that and you don't know to ask for that [service], then they won't offer that or ask you."

—Rural parent of child with special needs

With regard to services for children with special needs, Latino/a/x caregivers faced the additional challenge of finding qualified caregivers who spoke Spanish. The difficulty in finding Spanish-language speech therapy was mentioned by multiple caregivers, and—once secured—several described being unimpressed with the service provided. These caregivers recommended more provider training to identify speech delays, speedier referral processes, and increased availability of speech therapy in Spanish to better meet families' needs.

"It took a lot of work to find the place where my child goes to. I was looking for therapies in Spanish, I went to a place, but they rejected me because nobody spoke Spanish. Now my child goes to a center called CARD (Center for Autism and Related Disorders). The director speaks Spanish, but the therapies are in English."

—Spanish-speaking participant

Key Takeaways

Participants shared their complex and varied experiences in finding appropriate, high-quality early learning programs that met their needs, and the multiple challenges they face in their ongoing efforts to balance the needs of their children, their hopes for children's development and support, and adult needs for child care that allows them to work, parent, and thrive. Summarizing these voices does not do justice to their stories; however, we offer the following list of key themes parents shared with the recommendation that program planners and policy makers consider these in the context of their more nuanced and detailed stories, included in this report.

1. Shared Value for Supporting Children's Early Learning.

Families in all of the groups we spoke with had a common shared interest in ensuring that their children received high-quality early learning that could support the child's ability to successfully transition to and succeed in school.

2. Ideal Care Needs and Desires Vary. Reflecting families' diverse cultures, languages, geographic location, work schedules and other complexities, "ideal" child care looks different for different families. The message for the early learning system from these sessions is clearly that there is no "one size fits all" approach and that an effective system includes diverse providers, settings, and strategies.

3. Trusted, Affordable, Available Care. At the same time, across these different families it was clear: All families want a child care provider that they can trust, where their children will be safe, and the child care is affordable, accessible, and open during the days and times that families need care.

4. Compromising for Affordability. The lack of available, affordable care led families to compromise other factors, including quality, to secure affordable early learning programs that allowed parents to work. Other parents sacrificed working at all because of the cost of care, or described complex patchworks of care that were clearly stressful at best and at worst harmful to relationships and adult and child well-being.

5. Oregon Needs More Culturally Specific and Responsive Care Options. The ability of early learning settings to provide dual language programs that reflect children's cultural backgrounds and facilitate quality partnerships with adult family members is critical to addressing noted disparities in school readiness and success for these children. Such programs should not be considered optional, but rather a core part of Oregon's early learning system. In addition to language



and cultural barriers, these families face the additional burden of systemic racism, day-to-day experiences of discrimination, and both explicit and implicit bias on the part of early learning providers, teachers, and others. Overcoming families' mistrust of a school and early learning system based in White dominant systems and culture will take proactive work to build capacity for early learning from within these communities themselves.

6. Rural and Geographically Isolated Families Need More Child Care Options.

More than any other families we spoke with, families living in rural and frontier areas expressed a sense of desperation and frustration with the lack of early learning options and described the compromises they were making to secure care of any type. More resources to increase availability as well as accessibility (e.g., ensuring transportation supports) is paramount for meeting these families' needs.

7. Families with Children with Special Needs Require Early Learning Providers with More Specialized Training.

Enhancing the availability of training as well as increasing the incentives for providers to engage in training and successfully provide inclusive settings is a priority. Families with children with special needs also expressed the need for better integration of EI/ECSE services into existing settings as well as more on-site support from trained EI/ECSE staff, and more regular communication with their EI/ECSE providers.



Other Key Findings from Prior Sessions and Reports

In addition to the experiences and information provided in these listening sessions, a few themes and issues were highlighted in prior family engagement work done by Early Learning Hubs in the Fall of 2019. While some of the experiences and challenges families shared in those prior sessions mirrored themes highlighted in this report, a few key things did not emerge in the listening sessions held for the PDG projects that highlight additional family needs.

8. Foster Families Have Additional Needs for Early Learning Support. Foster families who are caring for children who have been removed from parental care expressed a need for early learning providers who understand how to provide trauma-informed care and who are sensitive to the needs of these children. Foster parents also described specific challenges related to qualifying for state subsidies for child care (ERDC) citing low payment rates, fewer child care options, and complicated state application systems.

9. Homeless Families Emphasized Safety, Stable Settings, and Healthy Food. These families noted that having a regular early learning provider to go to provided stability that these children needed. They also talked about the need for early learning settings to address children's food insecurity. These families described living in a constant state of concern that children would not have enough healthy food to eat.

10. Additional Safety Concerns. Across a relatively large number of migrant parents, an issue that was shared was their deep concern about safety; these parents suggested that more security cameras on site at child care centers would help develop trust and feel more sure that children were safe.

11. Other Key Supports that parents shared in these prior listening sessions and surveys included:

- ▶ A desire for help connecting with community resources to help with family stability (housing, food, etc.)
- ▶ More regular communication between early learning providers and parents, with updates on what children were doing and learning during the day
- ▶ More publicly available parental "reviews" of child care providers and facilities
- ▶ More opportunities for Head Start or Head Start "like" programs to be provided to families who are on waitlists

Families Not Well Represented in Family Engagement Efforts

While these listening sessions, and the work done across the state to hear from families that we were able to identify and review, reflected some of the experiences of specific groups. There were families that were not as well represented, such as the incarcerated/newly paroled mothers and American Indian families. In addition, there were families identified as priority populations that we were not able to hear from, including African American families, Asian and Pacific Islander families, and military families. These families may require specific kinds of early learning programs and supports in order to ensure their children are receiving the type of care that can help them be ready and successful in school, and more information is clearly needed to adequately plan and implement effective programs for these families.

Listening Session Summaries



Family Listening Session

Hearing from Parents About Their Child Care Needs

Bienestar Forest Grove

In January 2020, a listening session with parents and caregivers was held at the Popular Education Design Bienestar program in Forest Grove, Oregon. This listening session was part of a series of family listening sessions funded by the Preschool Development Grant as a part of a statewide early learning needs assessment. The listening session was co-designed, organized, and hosted by Bienestar and AB Cultural Drivers in partnership with OSLC Developments, Inc. and Portland State University. The goal of the listening sessions was to hear family voices that have not yet been captured in understanding families' early learning needs and experiences. This listening session was held in Spanish with 13 parents and caregivers—10 mothers of young children, 2 fathers, and 1 grandmother.

Current Child Care Experiences and Building School Readiness

Current Early Learning Supports and Benefits

Most (four) of these parents reported that they care for their children themselves, and one reported having a friend/neighbor provide care. Two talked about using a local daycare center. Parents talked about having children paint, practice letters, and do their "ABC's." Three parents talked about the benefits of both preschool and educational materials provided by Bienestar (although the parent and Bienestar staff noted that the program lost funding for the parenting education materials that had formerly been provided). They described benefits such as helping children learn skills like letters and writing their names, as well as social and emotional skills:

"I have seen that those kids who went, when entering public school, they don't cry, they have relationships with other kids, they communicate, and they are not afraid. I have seen other kids that did not go and it shows at the bus stop. They are crying or they don't want to leave their parents. You can see the differences."

"Yo me he dado cuenta que los niños cuando entran a una escuela publica no lloran, tienen relación con los niños, tienen comunicación, no tienen miedo. Yo veo que hay otros niños que no los mandan, y se nota en la parada del bus, no quieren ir están llorando o les van a dejar los papas y no se quieren despegar. He visto una diferencia."



Families Want More Spanish Language Instruction and Support

Several parents noted wanting to have children learn to read and write in Spanish and about challenges for dual-language learners. Having providers who speak the families' home language was clearly important for all these families. While all spoke Spanish and said they could find caregivers/babysitters who spoke Spanish, one noted that they could not find a provider who spoke their Mayan language (Chuj).

"We are already losing much of our culture. It's true that we speak Spanish, but the reality is that English is really the focus. We don't really have time to teach reading or writing in Spanish."

De nuestras culturas nosotros ya lo estamos perdiendo mucho. Es cierto que nosotros hablamos español, pero aquí en realmente lo que se enfocan mas es el ingles. Nosotros no tenemos tiempo para estar enseñado como se escribe o lea."

One parent described the importance of early learning supports for dual-language learners, and another noted the importance of her caregiver sharing her family's culture:

"We speak Spanish at home because we want him to learn our language and he is learning English at school. Because he wasn't prepared before, it becomes confusing, he is not at the 2nd or 3rd grade level...it is very confusing for them at the beginning."

"Nosotros hablamos Espanol mas en la casa porque queremos que aprenda nuestro idioma y el inglés lo está aprendiendo en la escuela. Como no estaba preparado antes se hace muy confuso, no están al nivel que tienen que estar hasta que llegan al 2nd o 3rd grado...Pero si es muy confuso para ellos al principio."

"I really like that the lady who takes care of my girl celebrates the traditions that we follow."

"La señora que cuida a mi niña me gusta mucho, celebraran las tradiciones que nosotros seguimos."

In particular, working parents who relied on child care providers noted the important role of these persons for their children's learning:

"Because they are the ones who spend the most time with the children—for us, we mostly have time in the morning. We arrive home and need to cook, get washed up, get them ready for the next day. We have a bit of time, but not a lot."

"Si porque ellos son los que pasan lo mas tiempo con los niños—que nosotros, hay más tiempo en la mañana. Nosotros llegamos, nos ponemos a cocinar, tenemos que banarlos, tenemos que alistarlos para el próximo día. Si tenemos tiempo, pero no tanto tiempo."

Challenges: Finding Trusted Caregivers

Several parents talked about the cost of child care as well as the difficulty of finding trusted caregivers. Trust and feeling comfortable that caregivers will provide good care, including basic care such as providing adequate food were valued. Several gave examples of negative experiences with in-home providers, for example,

"Just because they are licensed doesn't mean they are doing a good job. I met a lady that was licensed, and one day I arrived from work early and found my girls eating on the floor because the lady didn't want to clean up after them. I didn't like seeing that."



Families Want More Spanish Language Instruction and Support

“Even now we don’t know if it’s because he has poor hearing or it’s because he doesn’t understand. We noticed he was regressing a lot. What I’m thinking and what I have observed is that he is confused with Spanish and English. He doesn’t understand. With English there is little he doesn’t understand, with Spanish he understands but doesn’t speak it. At home...we sit down with him and explain and he understands, he is very intelligent. I don’t understand why he can’t succeed when he gets to class. I don’t know what is happening.”

“Hasta ahorita no sabes si es porque no escucha bien o es porque no entiende...Lo que yo estoy pensando y lo que yo miro es que esta confundido con el español y ingles. No entiende. El inglés lo habla no hay muchas cosas que no entiende, el español lo entiende, pero no lo habla...En casa amos puesto más tiempo con él, nos sentamos y le explicamos y el sabe es bien inteligente, no entiendo porque cuándo llega a la clase no puede. No se lo que esta pasando.”

“Solo porque tienen licencia no quiere decir que van a hacer buen trabajo. Yo conocí a una mujer que tenía licencia, un día llegué del trabajo muy pronto y encontré a mis niñas comiendo en el piso porque ella no los quería limpiar. No me gusto verlo.”

One mother noted that her son was crying when she picked him up from care:

“I asked my son why he was crying and he didn’t want to tell me. The next day I asked him again. He told me that she [child care provider] was scolding the kids she watches and in order to punish them she would stick them in the closet. I was going to report her.”

“Le pregunte a mi hijo porque estaba llorando y no me quiso decir. El otro día le pregunte otra vez. Me dijo que ella estaba regañando a los niños que van ahí, y para castigarlos lo metió en el closet. Iba reportarlo.”

“It’s difficult to find someone you trust and you know will take good care of them. I wouldn’t be able to work without the help of my mom or cousin.”

“Es difícil encontrar alguien de confianza que tu sepas que los va cuidar bien. Yo no trabajaría sin la ayuda de mi mama o mi prima.”

“The difficult part for me is after school, because I take her to care and I feel there is no routine or dedication there. I would like someone here [Bienestar] or near my home that can take care of her and maintain the same rules [as the preschool]. At the moment my neighbor watches her and I sometimes come back and find them watching television.”

“Lo que me dificulta a mi es después de la escolita, como la llevo a cuidar yo siento que ahí no le dan lo mismo rutina o dedicación. Me gustaría una persona aquí o donde vivo para que me lo sigue cuidando así con reglas. Porque yo le doy a una vecina y a veces los encuentro mirando televisión.”

In-Home Providers Were Not a Source of Parenting Advice or Help Preparing Parents for Kindergarten

All of the parents except one said that when they have used in-home child care providers, these providers have not been a source of information or activities to help children learn.

“I think that babysitters don’t usually give advice. If they barely have time to take care of all the children they have, then they don’t have time to give advice.”

“Yo pienso que las personas que lo cuidan no van a dar consejo. Si no tienen tiempo para cuidar todos los niños que tienen, no tienen tiempo para dar consejos.”



Challenges: Working Families and the Cost of Care

The cost of care was clearly a barrier and challenge for parents who wanted or needed to work.

"I stopped working for that reason, because Monday to Friday I was going to have to pay for four [children]. I thought it better to stay at home."

"Deje de trabajar por lo mismo, porque lunes a viernes iba pagar para cuatro [ninos]. No me convenía, mejor me quede en la casa."

"I told my husband I should work at night just like he works during the day. But it's the same thing—he wanted to pay my mom so we could both work [at the same time], but I told him in that case I would rather not work."

"Yo le dije a mi esposo que yo trabajo en la noche como el trabaja en el día. Pero es lo mismo. Él quería que yo le esta pagando a mi mama para que los dos trabajamos. Pero le dije que mejor no trabajo."

One parent talked about the complication of having different kinds of early learning programs, with different family eligibility requirements, although noted that they personally were benefiting from a publically funded program.

"What they want more than anything else is to make money."

One parent contrasted these experiences with the benefits of more formal preschool programs:

"The nursery is better than having someone take care of them in their homes. At the nursery they teach them a variety of things, they are more independent, they play, sing, socialize with other kids. They benefit more from going to school."

"La Escuelita es mejor que los que cuidan en las casas de las personas. En la escuelita los enseñan varias cosas, son mas independientes, juegan, cantan, socializan con otros niños. Les ayuda mas ir a la escuelita."

Several parents described the importance of getting information to help them prepare for kindergarten:

"It is important to establish a routine, kindergarten has a schedule, a time to get up. As a parent it would be useful to know the specifics of the routine."

"Es importante tener una rutina, en el kínder hay un horario que tienen que levantar. Como padre ayudaría saber mas de la rutina."

Another parent described wanting more help for parents and child care providers in helping children with homework:

"It is difficult for us to know how to help them. Because...I can tell them, look, this is the answer but they won't learn like that. That's why the teacher says if the kids don't know to come and ask them. That's why sometimes babysitters can't help with schoolwork."

"Porque nosotros...Yo le puedo decir mira es esto, pero no va aprender porque si yo le digo la respuesta. Los maestros los dice que si no saben de la pregunta que nos venga a preguntar a nosotros. Por eso a veces los babysitters no les pueden ayudar a los niños a hacer lo que tienen que hacer, porque eso es la regla que ponen en la escuela."

What Would Ideal Child Care Look Like?

All parents preferred local care in their community and near their homes. Three would like to see full day care, 5 days per week. Transportation was noted as a challenge, even if bus transportation was offered, with two noting a preference for bringing children themselves but risk in doing so:

“Many people are able to drive but they don’t have a license so there is a risk involved...even if they want to take them, the bus might be safer.”

“Hay mucha gente que podrian manejar pero no tienen la licencia entonces hay riesgo de manejar...Aunque quieren llevarlos es mas seguro ir en el bus.”

What Other Resources Would Help Parents

These parents described a number of concrete resources that they felt would help them to “be the best mom or dad possible” including good health, a washer/drier, shorter or more flexible work hours, or more work hours so both parents would not have to work.

“We all wish to be good parents. But sometimes not all of us were good kids, but now I want to be a good parent. Health and patience in order to understand my children...have good health, everything else will follow.”

“Todos quisiéramos ser buenos papas, pero a veces no fuimos buenos hijos, ahora quiero ser buen papa. Salud y paciencia para poder entender mis hijos, teniendo salud viene todo.”

One father said what he most wanted was:

“More energy in order to work a double shift, so that my wife could stay home with the kids.”

“Mas energía para trabar doublé turno, para que se puede quedar mi esposa con los niños.”

Key Takeaways

- ▶ Parents had challenges finding close-by, affordable, high-quality care, and often relied on informal care. While some parents had good experiences with these providers, others reported feeling these caregivers were not providing the supports they or their children most needed to be ready for kindergarten.
- ▶ Parents in this group had a good sense of when children’s needs were not being met in their early learning setting, and those who had children in more formal preschool programs valued the experiences they were getting there.
- ▶ This group of parents are reporting significant challenges promoting and maintaining their children’s Spanish language skills and the frustration and communication issues their children are experiencing while engaging with English monolingual learning environments.
- ▶ Lack of affordable care was a barrier to parents being able to work.
- ▶ Parents valued and preferred having providers who could speak their home language, and wanted more support for full dual-language learning.

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Responsive Evaluation & Research

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Opiniones de padres sobre el cuidado infantil

Bienestar Forest Grove

En enero de 2020, se llevó a cabo una jornada de conversación comunitaria con padres y cuidadores en el Programa Bienestar para el diseño de la educación popular (Popular Education Design Bienestar Program) en Forest Grove, Oregon. Esa jornada formó parte de una serie de jornadas con familias que se llevaron a cabo con fondos provenientes de la Subvención para el Desarrollo de la Educación Preescolar en el marco de una evaluación de las necesidades de aprendizaje temprano en todo el estado. La jornada fue codiseñada, planificada y organizada por Bienestar y AB Cultural Drivers, en colaboración con la Universidad Estatal de Portland y OSLC Developments, Inc. El objetivo de las jornadas era escuchar las opiniones de familias que aún no estaban registradas para comprender las necesidades y las experiencias de aprendizaje temprano de las familias. La jornada de conversación comunitaria se llevó a cabo en español, con la participación de 13 padres y cuidadores: 10 madres de niños pequeños, dos padres y una abuela.

Experiencias actuales con el cuidado infantil y desarrollo de la preparación escolar

Apoyos y beneficios actuales relacionados con el aprendizaje temprano

La mayoría de los padres (4) informaron que cuidan a sus hijos ellos mismos, y uno de los padres informó que tiene una amiga/vecina que proporciona cuidado infantil. Dos hablaron sobre el uso de una guardería local. Los padres hablaron acerca de mandar a sus hijos a pintar, a practicar las letras y a aprender el abecedario. Tres padres hablaron sobre los beneficios de los materiales preescolares y educativos proporcionados por Bienestar (aunque los padres y el personal de Bienestar indicaron que el programa perdió la financiación que recibía antes para los materiales de educación en crianza de niños). Los padres describieron beneficios tales como ayudar a los niños a aprender habilidades, como las letras y la escritura de sus nombres, como también habilidades sociales y emocionales:



Las familias quieren más enseñanza y apoyo en español

Varios padres indicaron querer que los niños aprendan a leer y escribir en español, y hablaron sobre las dificultades que tienen los estudiantes que aprenden en dos idiomas. Contar con proveedores que hablen la lengua materna de las familias claramente era importante para todas estas familias. Si bien todos hablaban español y dijeron que pudieron encontrar cuidadores/niñeras que hablaran español, uno dijo que no pudo encontrar un proveedor que hablara su lengua maya (chuj).

“De nuestras culturas nosotros ya lo estamos perdiendo mucho. Es cierto que nosotros hablamos español, pero aquí en realmente lo que se enfocan más es el inglés. Nosotros no tenemos tiempo para estar enseñando cómo se escribe o lea.”

“Hasta ahorita no sabes si es porque no escucha bien o es porque no entiende...Lo que yo estoy pensando y lo que yo miro es que está confundido con el español e inglés. No entiende. El inglés lo habla no hay muchas cosas que no entiende, el español lo entiende, pero no lo habla...En casa ams puesto más tiempo con él, nos sentamos y le explicamos y él sabe es bien inteligente, no entiendo porque cuando llega a la clase no puede. No sé lo que está pasando.”

“Yo me he dado cuenta que los niños cuando entran a una escuela publica no lloran, tienen relación con los niños, tienen comunicación, no tienen miedo. Yo veo que hay otros niños que no los mandan, y se nota en la parada del bus, no quieren ir están llorando o les van a dejar los papas y no se quieren despegar. He visto una diferencia.”

Uno de los padres describió la importancia de los apoyos relacionados con el aprendizaje temprano para los estudiantes que aprenden en dos idiomas, y otra madre señaló la importancia de que la cuidadora comparta la cultura de la familia:

“Nosotros hablamos español más en la casa porque queremos que aprenda nuestro idioma y el inglés lo está aprendiendo en la escuela. Como no estaba preparado antes se hace muy confuso, no están al nivel que tienen que estar hasta que llegan al 2do o 3er grado...Pero sí es muy confuso para ellos al principio.”

“La señora que cuida a mi niña me gusta mucho, celebraron las tradiciones que nosotros seguimos.”

En particular, los padres que trabajan y dependen de proveedores de cuidado infantil mencionaron la importante función que desempeñan esas personas para el aprendizaje de sus hijos, “Sí porque ellos son los que pasan lo mas tiempo con los niños—que nosotros, hay más tiempo en la mañana. Nosotros llegamos, nos ponemos a cocinar, tenemos que banarlos, tenemos que alistarlos para el próximo día. Sí tenemos tiempo, pero no tanto tiempo.”

Dificultades para encontrar cuidado infantil: encontrar cuidadores de confianza

Varios padres hablaron sobre el costo del cuidado infantil, como también sobre la dificultad de encontrar cuidadores de confianza. Se consideraron valiosas la confianza y la seguridad de que los cuidadores proporcionarán un buen cuidado, incluido el cuidado básico, como ofrecer alimentos adecuados. Varios proporcionaron ejemplos de experiencias negativas con proveedores domiciliarios; por ejemplo, “Solo porque tienen licencia no quiere decir que van a hacer buen trabajo. Yo conocí a una mujer que tenía licencia, un día llegué del trabajo muy pronto y encontré a mis niñas comiendo en el piso porque ella no los quería limpiar. No me gustó verlo.”

Una madre dijo que su hijo estaba llorando cuando ella fue a buscarlo al lugar donde recibe cuidado infantil, “Le pregunte a mi hijo por qué estaba llorando y no me quiso decir. El otro día le pregunté otra vez. Me dijo que ella estaba regañando a los niños que van ahí, y para castigarlos lo metió en el closet. Iba reportarlo.”



Dificultades para encontrar cuidado infantil: familias que trabajan y costo del cuidado infantil

El costo del cuidado infantil fue claramente un obstáculo y una dificultad para los padres que querían o necesitaban trabajar.

“Dejé de trabajar por lo mismo, porque lunes a viernes iba pagar para cuatro [niños]. No me convenía, mejor me quedé en la casa.”

“Yo le dije a mi esposo que yo trabajo en la noche como el trabaja en el día. Pero es lo mismo. Él quería que yo le está pagando a mi mamá para que los dos trabajamos. Pero le dije que mejor no trabajo.”

Un padre habló sobre la complicación de tener diferentes tipos de programas de aprendizaje temprano, con diferentes requisitos de elegibilidad para las familias, aunque indicó que, personalmente, ellos se beneficiaron de un programa con fondos públicos.

“Es difícil encontrar alguien de confianza que tu sepas que los va cuidar bien. Yo no trabajaría sin la ayuda de mi mamá o mi prima.”

Los proveedores domiciliarios no les brindaron a los padres consejos sobre la crianza de niños ni ayuda respecto de la preparación para el jardín de niños

Todos los padres, excepto uno, dijeron que cuando han usado los servicios de proveedores de cuidado infantil domiciliarios, dichos proveedores no han sido una fuente de información o actividades para ayudar a sus hijos a aprender.

“Yo pienso que las personas que lo cuidan no van a dar consejo. Si no tienen tiempo para cuidar todos los niños que tienen, no tienen tiempo para dar consejos.”

“Lo que más desean, por encima de todas las cosas, es ganar dinero.”

Un padre comparó esas experiencias con los beneficios de programas preescolares más formales:

“La escolita es mejor que los que cuidan en las casas de las personas. En la escolita los enseñan varias cosas, son más independientes, juegan, cantan, socializan con otros niños. Les ayuda más ir a la escolita.”

Varios padres describieron la importancia de obtener información que los ayude a prepararse para el jardín de niños:

“Es importante tener una rutina, en el kínder hay un horario que tienen que levantar. Como padre ayudaría saber más de la rutina.”

Otro padre indicó que desea que los padres y los proveedores de cuidado infantil reciban más apoyo para poder ayudar a los niños con la tarea para el hogar:

“Porque nosotros...Yo le puedo decir mira es esto, pero no va a aprender porqué si yo le digo la respuesta. Los maestros los dice que si no saben de la pregunta que nos venga a preguntar a nosotros. Por eso a veces los babysitters no les pueden ayudar a los niños a hacer lo que tienen que hacer, porque eso es la regla que ponen en la escuela.”



Aportes clave

- ▶ Los padres tuvieron dificultades para encontrar cuidado infantil de alta calidad y asequible, y con frecuencia, recurrieron a proveedores domiciliarios informales. Si bien algunos padres tuvieron buenas experiencias con esos proveedores, otros informaron sentir que dichos cuidadores no proporcionaban los apoyos que ellos o sus hijos más necesitaban para estar listos para el jardín de niños.
- ▶ Los padres de este grupo tuvieron una buena noción de los casos en los que no se satisfacían las necesidades de los niños en el entorno de aprendizaje temprano, y los que tenían hijos en programas preescolares más formales valoraron las experiencias que recibían allí.
- ▶ La falta de opciones asequibles de cuidado infantil fue un obstáculo para que los padres puedan trabajar.
- ▶ Los padres valoraron y prefirieron contar con proveedores que pudieran hablar su lengua materna, y deseaban más apoyo para el aprendizaje pleno en dos idiomas.

¿Cómo sería el cuidado infantil ideal?

Todos los padres prefirieron el cuidado infantil local, en su comunidad y cerca de sus hogares. Tres desean contar con una opción de cuidado infantil de día completo, cinco días por semana. Se consideró el transporte como una dificultad, incluso si se ofrecía transporte en autobús, y dos indicaron preferencia por llevar ellos mismos a sus hijos, pero se asumen riesgos:

“Hay mucha gente que podrían manejar pero no tienen la licencia entonces hay riesgo de manejar... Aunque quieren llevarlos es más seguro ir en el bus.”

¿Qué otros recursos ayudarían a los padres?

Estos padres describieron varios recursos concretos que consideraron que los ayudarían a **“desempeñar sus roles de padres de la mejor manera posible,”** como buena salud, una lavadora/ secadora, jornada laboral más corta o más flexible, o más horas de trabajo para que no tuvieran que trabajar ambos padres.

“Todos quisiéramos ser buenos papás, pero a veces no fuimos buenos hijos., ahora quiero ser buen papá. Salud y paciencia para poder entender mis hijos, teniendo salud viene todo.”

Un padre dijo que lo que más deseaba era **“Mas energía para trabajar doblé turno, para que se puede quedar mi esposa con los niños.”**

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Responsive Evaluation & Research

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Family Listening Session

Hearing from Parents About Their Child Care Needs

Bienestar Scappoose

In January 2020, a listening session with parents was held in Scappoose, Oregon to learn about their needs for, and experiences with, child care in their community. This listening session was part of a series of family listening sessions funded by the Preschool Development Grant as a part of a statewide early learning needs assessment. The goal of the listening session was to hear family voices that have not yet been reflected in ongoing work to better understand families' early learning needs and experiences. This session was co-designed, planned, and hosted by Bienestar and by researchers from AB Cultural Drivers, OSLC Developments, Inc., and Portland State University. Seven caregivers (six mothers, one grandmother) who currently live in Scappoose attended the session. The session was held at an apartment complex, and the participants were residents of the complex. The listening session was conducted in Spanish.

Current Child Care Experiences and Building School Readiness

Who currently takes care of your children ages 0-5 years and what activities do they do?

Most caregivers in this listening session took care of their children themselves. One parent relied on friends and neighbors, and one parent had a child in Head Start. The caregivers described a number of activities that the children do with their care providers, such as exercising, going to the park, singing, learning colors and letters, learning to write their name, and practicing being respectful to other children and adults.

Reflecting Family and Cultural Values and Traditions

The parents and caregivers speak Spanish with their children at home, as do their friends and neighbors that care for their children. However, the family with a child in Head Start shared, "There is only one teacher there that speaks Spanish. She is only there once a week, sometimes just for a little while, sometimes all day... Sometimes it is difficult for my son to communicate because he doesn't speak much English but now that he is going to school he is learning a lot."

One caregiver shared that their providers celebrated cultural traditions with their children: "...they taught them a lot about the Christmas celebration."

"Nada más hay una maestra que habla español. Está con ellos un día de la semana. A veces solo un rato, y a veces todo el día los martes... A veces es difícil para mi niño comunicarse porque él no habla mucho inglés. Ahorita que está yendo a la escuelita está aprendiendo bastante."

"...les enseñaron mucho lo que se celebra en la Navidad."



Where would you like your care to be?

All caregivers wanted care that was close to their home in Scappoose, with providers who speak Spanish. These caregivers wanted their children to arrive to care using bus transportation. A couple of caregivers shared that they do not drive or do not always have access to a car, so without transportation included in the care program, it is not possible for these families to send their children to care.

What time or days of the week would you like your child to be in care?

All caregivers indicated a preference for full day care, 8-10 hours per day, Monday through Friday, or at least through Thursday. Having weekend care options would also be ideal. Most of these families needed this care to be able to do field agriculture work. One caregiver described the schedule that would be needed to cover the work hours.

“If you work in the field, you start at 7:30am. So you would drop [your children] off at 6:30am and would pick them up at 4:00pm.”

“Trabajando en el campo, entras a las 7:30 am y dejas a el niño a las 6:30 am y los vas a recoger a las 4:00 pm.”

Another caregiver who has a child in care had not seen Mexican traditions being taught. However, the apartment complex offers summer classes, and one caregiver said, “When they attend summer classes they teach them about traditions like Day of the Dead, and they also show them traditional Mexican dances.”

“Cuando están en clases de verano también los enseñan tradiciones como el día de los muertos, y también les enseñan bailes típicos de México.”

Their Ideal Child Care Situation

Why is it important for your children to have educational, artistic, and other activities to help them prepare for kindergarten?

All caregivers agreed that these activities are important. One caregiver shared these activities are important “so that they can have more self-confidence, [and] so they can get along with other kids because they often start out very shy and don’t want to interact with other kids.”

“Que estén más seguros de ellos mismos [y] puedan convivir con otros niños porque a veces son muy tímidos y no quieren convivir con otros niños.”

Another caregiver highlighted the importance of learning social skills and routines.

“I think that it’s mostly about helping them learn to share and being prepared for that. It was very difficult for my oldest when they started kinder without knowing this...It would be helpful to prepare them to learn how rules are different [than at home]... At home they are used to different routines, for example they are used to eating at a certain time and if they take, say, longer than 20 minutes, it’s fine, and they can eat until they are full. In school they might only have 15 minutes and if they don’t finish in that time then, oh well.”

“Yo siento que, sí es más para ayudarlos o enseñarlos a compartir, para prepararlos. Fue muy frustrante para el más grande entrar a kínder sin saber...Nos ayudaría mucho para prepararlos a enseñarlos pues en casa hay reglas diferentes... En la casa ellos están acostumbrados a rutinas distintas, por ejemplo en la hora de comer, si se demoran más de 20 minutos está bien que coma cuando él pueda. En la escuela no, solamente tiene los 15min y si no come, pues ya.”

Some parents shared concern about their child being familiar with English.



What would you like your children to learn?

Caregivers wanted their children to learn basic academic skills like colors and letters, games to play with other children (“other than tablet or phone games”), art, painting, music, and sports like volleyball, soccer, swimming, and basketball.

A few caregivers also wanted their children to learn emotional regulation strategies, “ways to calm down when frustrated or stressed.” These caregivers shared that their children have difficult drop offs, where they get very sad.

“They always have it in their heads that we will leave them and never return for them. We can start [with the strategies] to help them calm down and feel safe.”

“Siempre ellos tienen en la mente que uno los va dejar y no regresar por ellos. Pues de ahí, ayudarlos a calmarse y sentirse seguros.”

One caregiver shared that simply reassuring their children is not enough. “All this time that I have taken him has been very difficult for both of us. He still tells me ‘No, I don’t want to be there because you’re not going to be with me.’...One can talk to them, and I always talked to him before taking him in. We can talk to them, but it’s very different from the lived experience.”

“Todo este tiempo que le llevo es bien difícil para los dos. Él todavía me dice que ‘No, no quiero estar ahí porque tu no vas a estar conmigo.’...Aunque uno les platicue, y yo siempre le platicaba antes de que fuera. Pero es diferente, una cosa es que les platicamos y a parte es lo que viven.”

Why is it important for your children to have educational, artistic, and other activities to help them prepare for kindergarten? *(continued)*

“[My son’s] primary language is Spanish because that is what we speak at home. I have observed that before going to school, he already needs to be familiar with English.”

“Como él tiene el idioma español primero porque nosotros lo hablamos en casa; y veo que en la escuela tiene que ya estar con el inglés.”

When referring to an older son, a caregiver shared, “In high school they spoke more in Spanish than in English and it was very difficult for him, [because the elementary] schools here are all in English.”

“Allá en el Head Start hablaban más español que el inglés y le costó mucho [porque en la escuela] es todo en inglés.”

Why is it important to find providers that speak Spanish? Is it difficult to find providers who speak Spanish?

The caregivers agreed that it is important to have providers that speak Spanish, but options are limited. In addition to their concern about their children being able to communicate with teachers in the classroom, caregivers were also concerned about their own ability to communicate with school staff.

“To tell you the truth, in order to know how my girl is doing in school, I talk to the teacher who speaks Spanish, and she comes in on Tuesdays. She is the one I have the most communication with. I have no communication with those who only speak English.”

“Pues la verdad, ahorita, yo para saber cómo le va a mi niña en la escuela, hablo con la maestra que habla español; viene los martes. Ella es con la que más tengo comunicación. No tengo comunicación con las que solo hablan inglés.”

“[My 9-year-old] speaks English already so they help me. I don’t understand much, but I know how to express myself in the basic sense.”

“Tengo uno de 9 años en la escuela. Ya habla bien el inglés entonces me ayuda. No entiendo mucho, pero sé cómo expresarme en lo más básico.”

“In fact, you can get an interpreter at the school if you can’t communicate with the teacher. Just tell them ‘I don’t speak English, I want to interpret’ and they connect you with one.”

“Incluso en la escuela te dan intérprete por si no puedes comunicarte con la maestra. Nada más decir que ‘no hablas inglés; quiero interprete’ y si se lo dan.”

Challenges to Access Care

Many caregivers shared that it is very hard to find someone to care for their children.

"It is a very small community in these apartments...For example, if I want to go to work, it would be very hard for me to find someone to take care of my children here. There is no babysitter or anything."

"Es una comunidad muy pequeña en estos apartamentos... Por ejemplo, si yo me quiero ir a trabajar se me haría difícil encontrar quien me cuide a mis hijos aquí. No hay babysitter o nada que nos cuide a los niños."

All of these caregivers used to live in different cities where care was more accessible.

"When I lived in Hillsboro, my older girl started to go to school. I realized after moving here that I could not find [anyone] who would take care of my daughter...When I moved here, I found it very difficult, it even made me want to return to Hillsboro."

"Mi experiencia fue que cuando vivía en Hillsboro, mi niña grande empezó ir a la escuela. Me di cuenta que, ya pasándome aquí, no encontré quien me cuidara mi hija... Cuando yo me moví para acá se me hizo muy difícil, hasta me dio ganas de regresarme a Hillsboro."

"When I arrived [in Hillsboro...they talked to me about Head Start, and it was a huge help because it allowed me to work and have child care...Now with my youngest [child], I intended to enroll him [in Head Start], but I never got a call about [it] here in Scappoose. I filled out an application, but they never called me back."

"Cuando yo llegué aquí [En Hillsboro] Me platicaron de Head Start y era una gran ayuda para que yo fuera a trabajar y tener cuidado...Ahora con mi hijo pequeño intenté a meterlo a la escuela, pero no calificué aquí en Scapoose. Aquí tan poco me llamaron. Metí la aplicación y ya no me llamaron."

"If we want to work, but we have no one to take care of young children, we have to go without working."

"Sí queremos trabajar, pero no tenemos quien cuide a los niños pequeños...tenemos que quedarnos sin trabajar."

One caregiver shared that, while Bienestar has created a lounge for families with children at the apartment complex, it is still challenging to communicate with other parents in complex to turn that resource into a care opportunity.

"We as parents do not have good communication with one another...But I think that if we had good communication and said 'Well, [on] such a day you can [watch them], or I can for [a few] hours...' This way the children would not be so frustrated, because here they can draw, or play, or do activities, or other things. I... thought to communicate with everyone, but there was no opportunity. I think that communication is often what is missing."

"Pero como no tenemos comunicación con todos los padres, entonces no hacemos nada...Pero pienso que si tuviéramos una comunicación y dijéramos 'pues tal día tu puedes, o yo puedo por [unas horas]...' Y así los niños no estarían tan frustrados. Porque aquí pueden dibujar, o jugar, o hacer actividades, u otras cosas...Yo como mamá había pensado comunicarme con todas, pero no había oportunidad. Creo que los que nos falta mucho es la comunicación."

The need for trusted caregivers was also clear. One caregiver shared an example of a her son not feeling safe with a care provider:

"One can sense when they don't want to stay, they start to cry a lot. He said no and no, he would pull himself back when I took him out of his chair. There, they also took care of my other nephews, and once I asked my nephew, 'Does the lady does shout or scold you all?' He said yes. My child was smaller and could not express [himself]. I felt very bad that the lady was there and shouting at them. It was not the kind of behavior she should have with the children. She is supposed to be a babysitter, and she even had the license needed to care for kids."

"Una siente cuando ellos no se quieren quedar, se ponen a llorar demasiado. Decía que no y que no, se jalaba cuando le sacaba de la silla. ¿Ahí cuidaban a mis otros sobrinos, y una vez le dije a mi sobrinito "la señora les grita o regaña?" El me dijo que sí. Mi niño estaba más pequeño y no se podía expresar. Sentí muy feo que aquí esta señora les gritaba. No era el comportamiento que debía que tener con los niños. Se supone que es una babysitter, y hasta tenía la licencia para cuidar."

What information or help would you like to have in the future to make a good decision about child care?

Caregivers wanted the opportunity to get to meet potential care providers and get a sense of the care space. Additionally, they wanted to utilize the recommendation of other parents.

Other Challenges Experienced

One grandmother at the session shared her experience of her family being disrespected by teachers, police, and social workers. Within this community, events like the following example are somewhat common, and are very challenging situations for parents to be in, particularly if they are undocumented.

"I had an experience with my granddaughter where they [school staff] sent police officers to my daughter's house and arrested/detained her in front of her children... Because teachers will tell kids that if they are spanked they need to tell the teacher or call the police. I don't see it as a punishment that they are going to die from or anything. This leads to kids growing up with the idea that they can do or say whatever they want to their mother, or even shove them because the teachers tell them that if the parents do anything to them, they will be sent away..."

"Una siente cuando ellos no se quieren quedar, se ponen a llorar demasiado. Decía que no y que no, se jalaba cuando le sacaba de la silla. ¿Ahí cuidaban a mis otros sobrinos, y una vez le dije a mi sobrinito "la señora les grita o regañía?" El me dijo que sí. Mi niño estaba mas pequeño y no me podía expresar. Me sentí muy feo que aquí está la señora y les gritaba. No era el comportamiento que debía que tener con los niños. Se supone que es una babysitter, y hasta tenía la licencia para cuidar."

This person went on to describe how the family needed and requested support from the school to help manage their children's behavior, and yet did not receive the support they felt they needed. Instead, this grandmother felt her family was unfairly punished by the school, rather than supported.

"My daughter went to the school many times saying "my daughter is doing this, this, and this." [The school] never listened to her. Then the day the child came in with a slap on the wrist they had what they needed. I asked the social worker that came if she really thought that what she was doing was good? To come here and just scare the children?"

"Mi hija fue muchas veces a la escuela a hablar, 'mi hija está haciendo eso, eso y eso' [la escuela] nunca hizo caso. El día que llegó con un golpe en la mano, ya con eso tuvieron. ¡Yo le dije a la trabajadora social que si de verdad piensan que lo que están haciendo está bien... eso de venir a asustar a los niños!"

In this example, there was a disconnect between how families experienced the situation and how the school staff viewed and responded. Improving communication and understanding between schools and families could help to mitigate the potential negative impact of these experiences.

Have you ever had to leave work to take care of your children because paying to care for them is too expensive?

For this group of caregivers, price of care was not the primary barrier to care while access to trusted caregivers, is. Caregivers in the listening session have stopped working because they could not find someone to take care of their children. But if a family is lucky enough to find a spot in care, the cost of care may make it infeasible to continue working.

"People who take care of kids charge a lot. For example, if one works in the field, we know that it is the minimum wage. Paying about \$20-25 a day per kid and having them tend to two or three, it no longer makes sense to work. That's what those with a license charge, and it's even more for a baby."

"Lo que cobran las personas que cuidan a los niños es mucho. Por ejemplo, si uno trabaja en el campo, sabemos que es el mínimo. Pagar unos \$20-25 al día, y teniendo 2 o 3 pequeños ya no conviene trabajar. Eso es lo que cobran con licencia, y hasta sería más por [cuidar] un bebé."

Their Needs as Parents

What would help you be the best mom or dad you can be?

Caregivers shared some things that could help them prepare their children to be successful in kindergarten. One caregiver wanted access to a program to help parents learn English to better be able to help their children. Another wanted to know what children will be learning in kindergarten to help support their learning at home:

"For example, they will teach them numbers in school but we don't know them. We can have them count up to the number 10, but in kinder they don't stop at 10, they are more advanced."

"Por ejemplo, les enseñan los números en la escuela y uno no sabe...Uno les dice que cuente de uno a diez, pero he escuchado que en el kínder ya no es solo de uno a diez, es más avanzado."

Caregivers also emphasized how important it is to have good communication with their children's teachers.

"I also think that as mothers we have a sense of whether or not our kids have a tendency to be shy or rebellious, we have a right to tell the teacher about how our kids compose themselves. Giving teachers an idea of how the child composes themselves can help them create strategies for managing it...We need to have good communication with our teachers, and have a good understanding of how our kids are doing in school."

"Yo también creo que como mamás, si sabemos que nuestro hijo es rebelde o tímido, tenemos el derecho de decirle a la maestra que mi hijo es así. Porque ellos también van a saber cómo manejar su situación sabiendo como es el comportamiento de nuestros hijos...Tenemos que tener comunicación nosotros con los maestros. Y saber cómo van nuestros hijos también, porque también no es tan fácil de que diga una: 'pues ya los llevo a la escuela y se van a quedar ahí'; uno tiene que saber también cómo están y cómo van en la escuela."

Additionally, caregivers wished that they had more patience with their children and knowledge about how to care for them. This suggests a need for parent education classes and workshops for this population of caregivers.

Key Takeaways

- ▶ These caregivers valued activities that help prepare their children for kindergarten, particularly socio-emotional activities that help them learn to interact with other children and gain confidence in a school setting.
- ▶ The primary challenge that these families encounter is access to care. There are very few care options, either formal or informal, available to them. Lack of accessible transportation contributes to this, as many families are unable to travel outside of their own apartment complex for care. Additionally, if a family is lucky enough to find care, the cost of care may be too expensive to justify going to work. As a result, most of the caregivers who attended the session take care of their own young children and do not work.
- ▶ Many of these caregivers reported that their children struggle at drop offs with care providers. These caregivers wanted their children to learn emotional regulation strategies to help with these challenging transitions.
- ▶ These families feel that it is important to communicate with teachers about their children. However, communicating with teaching staff is challenging for these families, due to language barriers. There is only one teacher that speaks Spanish and works in this and the surrounding towns and is only available once a week.

Acknowledgements

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Opiniones de padres sobre el cuidado infantil

Bienestar Scappoose

En enero de 2020, se llevó a cabo una jornada de conversación comunitaria con padres en Scappoose, Oregon, para conocer sus necesidades de cuidado infantil y sus experiencias al respecto en la comunidad. Esa jornada formó parte de una serie de jornadas con familias que se llevaron a cabo con fondos provenientes de la Subvención para el Desarrollo de la Educación Preescolar en el marco de una evaluación de las necesidades de aprendizaje temprano en todo el estado. El objetivo de la jornada era escuchar las opiniones de familias que aún no estaban reflejadas en el trabajo en curso para comprender mejor las necesidades y las experiencias de aprendizaje temprano de las familias. La jornada fue codiseñada, planificada y organizada por Bienestar y por investigadores de AB Cultural Drivers, de la Universidad Estatal de Portland y del Centro de Aprendizaje Social de Oregon. A la jornada, asistieron 7 cuidadoras (6 madres, una abuela) que viven actualmente en Scappoose. La jornada se llevó a cabo en un complejo de apartamentos, y las personas que participaron vivían en el complejo. La jornada de conversación comunitaria se llevó a cabo en español.

Experiencias actuales con el cuidado infantil y el desarrollo de la preparación escolar

¿Quién cuida actualmente a sus hijos de 0 a 5 años y qué actividades realizan?

La mayoría de las cuidadoras que participaron en la jornada de conversación comunitaria cuidaban a sus hijos ellas mismas. Una madre dependía de amigos y vecinos, y otra tenía un hijo en Head Start. Las cuidadoras describieron varias actividades que los niños realizan con los proveedores de cuidado infantil, como hacer ejercicio, ir al parque, cantar, aprender los colores y las letras, aprender a escribir su nombre y practicar ser respetuosos con otros niños y adultos.

Consideración de las tradiciones y los valores familiares y culturales

Los padres y los cuidadores hablan español con sus hijos en el hogar, al igual que sus amigos y vecinos que cuidan a sus hijos. Sin embargo, la familia de un niño que asiste a Head Start comentó: **"Nada más hay una maestra que habla español. Esta con ellos un día de la semana. A veces solo un rato, y a veces todo el día los martes...A veces**



¿Dónde les gustaría que se preste el cuidado infantil?

Todas las cuidadoras querían cuidado infantil que estuviera cerca de su hogar en Scappoose, con proveedores que hablen español. Estas cuidadoras querían que sus hijos asistan al lugar de cuidado infantil en autobús. Un par de cuidadoras dijeron que no conducen o que no siempre tienen acceso a un automóvil; por lo tanto, si el programa de cuidado infantil no incluía transporte, esas familias no podían enviar a sus niños al programa de cuidado infantil.

¿En qué horarios o días de la semana les gustaría que sus hijos estén bajo cuidado?

Todas las cuidadoras indicaron preferencia por una opción de cuidado infantil de día completo, 8 a 10 horas por día, de lunes a viernes, o, al menos, hasta el jueves. También sería ideal contar con opciones de cuidado infantil los fines de semana. La mayoría de estas familias necesitaban esa opción de cuidado infantil para poder realizar trabajos agrícolas en el campo. Una cuidadora describió el horario que se necesitaría para cubrir la jornada laboral. **“Trabajando en el campo, entras a las 7:30am y dejas a el niño a las 6:30am y los vas a recoger a las 4:00pm.”**

es difícil para mi niño comunicarse porque él no habla mucho inglés. Ahorita que está yendo a la escuelita está aprendiendo bastante.”

Una cuidadora indicó que los proveedores celebraban tradiciones culturales con sus hijos: **“...les enseñaron mucho lo que se celebra la navidad.”**

Otra cuidadora que tenía un hijo en cuidado infantil no había notado que se enseñaran tradiciones mexicanas. Sin embargo, el complejo de apartamentos ofrece clases de verano, y una cuidadora dijo: **“Cuando están en clases de verano también los enseñan tradiciones como el día de los muertos, y también les enseñan bailes típicos de México.”**

Su situación ideal de cuidado infantil

¿Por qué es importante que sus hijos tengan actividades educativas, artísticas y de otro tipo que los ayuden a prepararse para el jardín de niños?

Todas las cuidadoras estuvieron de acuerdo en que esas actividades son importantes. **“Que estén más seguros de ellos mismos [y] pueden convivir con otros niños porque a veces son muy tímidos y no quieren convivir con otros niños.”**

Otra cuidadora hizo hincapié en la importancia de aprender rutinas y habilidades sociales.

“Yo siento que, sí es más para ayudarlos o enseñarlos a compartir, para prepararlos. Fue muy frustrante para el más grande entrar a kínder sin saber...Nos ayudaría mucho para prepararlos a enseñarlos pues en casa hay reglas diferentes...En la casa ellos están acostumbrados a rutinas distintas, por ejemplo, en la hora de comer, si se demoran más de 20 minutos está bien, que coma cuando él pueda. En la escuela no, solamente tiene los 15min y si no come, pues ya.”

Algunos padres manifestaron interés en que sus hijos estén familiarizados con el inglés.

“Como él tiene el idioma español primero porque nosotros lo hablamos en casa. Y veo que en la escuela tiene que ya estar con el inglés.”

Al referirse a un hijo mayor, una cuidadora dijo: **“Allá en el Head Start hablaron más español que el inglés y le costó mucho [porque la escuela] es todo en inglés.”**



¿Qué les gustaría que aprendan sus hijos?

Las cuidadoras querían que sus hijos aprendan las habilidades académicas básicas, como los colores y las letras, juegos para jugar con otros niños “aparte de los juegos en tabletas o teléfonos”, arte, pintura, música y deportes, como vóleybol, fútbol, natación y básquetbol.

Algunas cuidadoras también querían que sus hijos aprendan estrategias de regulación emocional, “formas de calmarse cuando se frustran o se estresan”. Estas cuidadoras comentaron que sus hijos tienen dificultad cuando los dejan, ya que se ponen muy tristes.

“Siempre ellos tienen en la mente que uno los va dejar y no regresar por ellos. Pues de ahí ayudarlos a calmarse y sentirse seguros.”

Un cuidador aseguró que simplemente consolar a sus hijos no es suficiente. “Todo este tiempo que le llevo es bien difícil para los dos. Él todavía me dice que ‘No, no quiero estar ahí porque tu no vas a estar conmigo.’ ... Aunque uno les platicue, y yo siempre le platicaba y antes de que fuera. Pero es diferente, una cosa es que les platicamos y aparte es lo que viven.”

¿Por qué es importante encontrar proveedores que hablen español? ¿Es difícil encontrar proveedores que hablen español?

Las cuidadoras estuvieron de acuerdo en que es importante contar con proveedores que hablen español, pero las opciones son limitadas. Además de su inquietud respecto de que sus hijos puedan comunicarse con las maestras en el salón de clases, las cuidadoras también estaban preocupadas por su propia capacidad para comunicarse con el personal de la escuela.

“Pues la verdad, ahorita, yo para saber cómo le va a mi niña en la escuela hablo con la maestra que habla español, viene los martes. Ella es con la que más tengo comunicación. No tengo comunicación con las que solo hablan inglés.”

“Tengo uno de 9 años en la escuela. Ya habla bien el inglés entonces me ayuda. No entiendo mucho, pero se cómo expresarme en lo más básico.”

“Incluso en la escuela te dan interprete por si no puedes comunicarte con la maestra. Nada más decir ‘no hablo ingles quiero interprete’ y sí se lo dan.”

Dificultades para acceder al cuidado infantil

Muchas cuidadoras comentaron que resulta muy difícil encontrar a alguien que cuide a sus hijos.

“Es una comunidad muy pequeña en estos apartamentos... Por ejemplo, si yo me quiero ir a trabajar se me haría difícil encontrar quién me cuide a mis hijos aquí. No hay babysitter o nada que nos cuide a los niños.”

Todas estas cuidadoras vivían en otras ciudades donde el cuidado infantil era más accesible.

“Mi experiencia fue que cuando vivía en Hillsboro, mi niña grande empezó ir a la escuela. Me di cuenta que, ya pasándome aquí, no encontré quién me cuidara a mi hija... Cuando yo me moví para acá se me hizo muy difícil, hasta me dio ganas de regresar a Hillsboro.”

“Cuando yo llegué aquí [en Hillsboro] Me platicaron de Head Start y era una gran ayuda para que yo fuera a trabajar y tener cuidado... Ahora con mi hijo pequeño intenté a meterlo a la escuela, pero no calificué en Hillsboro. Aquí tampoco me llamaron. Metí la aplicación y ya no me llamaron.”

“Si queremos trabajar, pero no tenemos quién cuiden los niños pequeños tenemos que quedarnos sin trabajar.”

Una cuidadora dijo que, si bien Bienestar ha creado un salón público para las familias con niños en el complejo de apartamentos, sigue siendo difícil comunicarse con otros padres que viven en el complejo para convertir ese recurso en una oportunidad de cuidado infantil.

“Pero como no tenemos comunicación con todos los padres, entonces no hacemos nada... Pero pienso que si tuviéramos una comunicación y dijéramos ‘pues tal día tú puedes, o yo puedo por [unas horas]...’ Y así los niños no estarían tan frustrados. Porque aquí pueden dibujar, o jugar, o hacer actividades, u otras cosas... Yo como mamá había pensado comunicarme con todas, pero no había oportunidad. Creo que lo que nos falta mucho es la comunicación.”

La necesidad de cuidadores de confianza también fue clara:

Una cuidadora compartió el ejemplo de que su hijo no se sentía seguro con un proveedor de cuidado infantil: “Una siente cuando ellos no se quieren quedar, se ponen a llorar demasiado. Decía que no y que no, se jalaba cuando le sacaba de la silla. ¿Ahí cuidaban a mis otros sobrinos, y una vez le dije a mi sobrinito ‘la señora les grita o regañía?’ Él me dijo que sí. Mi niño estaba más pequeño y no me podía expresar. Me sentí muy feo que aquí está la señora y les gritaba. No era el comportamiento que debía que tener con los niños. Se supone que es una babysitter, y hasta tenía la licencia para cuidar.”

¿Qué información o ayuda les gustaría tener en el futuro para tomar una buena decisión sobre el cuidado infantil?

Las cuidadoras querían contar con la oportunidad de conocer a los posibles proveedores de cuidado infantil y tener una idea de cómo es el espacio de cuidado infantil. Además, querían seguir la recomendación de otros padres.

Otras dificultades enfrentadas

Una abuela que asistió a la jornada compartió su experiencia y dijo que las maestras, los oficiales de policía y los trabajadores sociales son irrespetuosos con su familia. En esta comunidad, los eventos similares al siguiente ejemplo son algo frecuente, y son situaciones muy difíciles que enfrentan los padres, especialmente si son indocumentados.

“Tuve una experiencia con mi nieta donde ellos [el personal de la escuela] enviaron a la policía a la casa de mi hija y la detuvieron delante de sus niños... Porque los maestros les dicen a los niños que si les dan nalgadas tienen que informar a la maestra o llamar a la policía. No lo veo como un castigo que los va a matar ni nada. Esto hace que los niños crezcan con la idea que pueden hacer o decir cualquier cosa a su mamá o incluso empujarla porque los maestros les dicen que, si sus padres les tocan, se los quitarán de la casa...”

Esta persona continuó describiendo cómo la familia necesitaba y solicitaba apoyo de la escuela para poder controlar el comportamiento de sus hijos, y aún no recibieron el apoyo que consideraban que necesitaban. Más bien, esta abuela consideró que la escuela castigaba injustamente a su familia, en lugar de brindarle apoyo.

“Mi hija fue muchas veces a la escuela a hablar, ‘mi hija está haciendo eso, eso y eso’ [la escuela] nunca hizo caso. El día que llegó con un golpe en la mano, ya con eso tuvieron. ¿Yo le dije a la trabajadora social que si de verdad piensan que lo que están haciendo está bien? ¿De venir a asustar a los niños?”

En este ejemplo, hubo una falta de conexión entre cómo las familias vivieron la situación y cómo el personal de la escuela la consideró y respondió. Mejorar la comunicación y la comprensión entre las escuelas y las familias podría ayudar a mitigar el posible impacto negativo de esas experiencias.

¿Han tenido alguna vez que dejar de trabajar para cuidar a sus hijos porque el cuidado infantil es demasiado costoso?

Para este grupo de cuidadoras, el precio del cuidado infantil no fue el principal obstáculo para acceder a opciones de cuidado infantil, pero sí para acceder a cuidadores de confianza. Las cuidadoras presentes en la conversación comunitaria han dejado de trabajar porque no pudieron encontrar a alguien que cuidara a sus hijos. Pero si las familias tienen la suerte de encontrar un lugar en un centro de cuidado infantil, es probable que el costo del cuidado infantil haga que sea inviable seguir trabajando.

“Lo que cobran las personas que cuidan a los niños es mucho. Por ejemplo, si uno trabaja en el campo, sabemos que es el mínimo. Pagar unos \$20-\$25 al día, y teniendo 2 o 3 pequeños ya no conviene trabajar. Eso es lo que cobran con licencia, y hasta sería más por un bebé.”

Sus necesidades como padres

¿Qué los ayudaría a desempeñar sus roles de padres de la mejor manera posible?

Las cuidadoras comentaron algunas cosas que podrían ayudarlas a preparar a sus hijos para que tengan éxito en el jardín de niños. Una cuidadora quería acceso a un programa que ayude a los padres a aprender inglés a fin de poder ayudar mejor a sus hijos. Otra quería saber qué aprenderían los niños en el jardín de niños para poder apoyar su aprendizaje en el hogar:

“Por ejemplo, les enseñan los números en la escuela y uno no sabe...Uno les dice que cuenta de uno a diez, pero he escuchado que en el kínder ya no es solo de uno a diez, es más avanzado.”

Las cuidadoras también destacaron lo importante que es tener una buena comunicación con las maestras de sus hijos.

“Yo también creo que como mamás si sabemos que nuestro hijo es rebelde o tímido, tenemos el derecho de decirle a la maestra que mi hijo es así. Porque ellos también van a saber cómo manejar su situación sabiendo cómo es el comportamiento de nuestros hijos...Tenemos que tener comunicación nosotros con los maestros. Y saber cómo van nuestros hijos también porque también no es tan fácil de que diga una pues ya los llevo a la escuela y se van a quedar ahí. Uno tiene que saber también cómo están y cómo van en la escuela.”

Además, las cuidadoras deseaban tener más paciencia con sus hijos y conocimientos sobre cómo cuidarlos. Esto sugiere la necesidad de clases y talleres sobre educación para padres destinados a esta población de cuidadoras.

Aportes clave

- ▶ Estas cuidadoras valoraron las actividades que ayudan a preparar a sus hijos para el jardín de niños, especialmente las actividades sociales que les permiten aprender a interactuar con otros niños y adquirir confianza en un entorno escolar.
- ▶ La principal dificultad que enfrentan estas familias es el acceso al cuidado infantil. Disponen de muy pocas opciones de cuidado infantil, formales o informales. La falta de transporte accesible contribuye a eso, ya que muchas familias no pueden trasladarse fuera de su propio complejo de apartamentos para obtener cuidado infantil. Además, si una familia tiene la suerte de encontrar cuidado infantil, es posible que el costo sea demasiado alto para justificar que trabajen. Como resultado, la mayoría de las cuidadoras que asistieron a la jornada cuidan a sus propios hijos pequeños y no trabajan.
- ▶ Muchas de estas cuidadoras informaron que sus hijos oponen resistencia cuando los dejan con los proveedores de cuidado infantil. Estas cuidadoras querían que sus hijos aprendan estrategias de regulación emocional para ayudar con esas transiciones difíciles.
- ▶ Estas familias consideran que es importante comunicarse con los maestros sobre sus hijos. Sin embargo, la comunicación con el personal de enseñanza es un desafío para estas familias, debido a las barreras idiomáticas. No muchos maestros o miembros del personal de la escuela hablan español.

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Hearing from Parents About Their Child Care Needs

Bridging Communities

In January 2020, a listening session with six parents and caregivers was hosted by Bridging Communities in Medford, Oregon. Bridging Communities is a family support and advocacy network for families with children with disabilities. The listening sessions was part of a series of family listening sessions funded by the Preschool Development Grant as a part of a statewide early learning needs assessment. The listening session was co-designed, organized, and hosted by Bridging Communities in partnership with OSLC Developments, Inc. and Portland State University. The goal of the listening sessions was to hear family voices that have not yet been captured in understanding families' early learning needs and experiences. Four individual listening interviews were also held with parents residing in Southern Oregon who were unable to attend the Bridging Communities listening session. All participating families had a child with special needs, including Down syndrome, cerebral palsy, autism, and fetal alcohol spectrum disorder, and some children had multiple diagnoses.

Current Child Care Experiences and Building School Readiness

Many of these parents indicated that they spent considerable time themselves providing child care, but also frequently described needing multiple, sometimes complex arrangements in order to meet the child and families' needs. These arrangements included part-time child care or preschool, relying on family and friends with no other out-of-home care, and full-time center-based care. In making decisions about child care, parents highlighted the importance of affordability, safety, and quality as most important for them. Most parents overwhelmingly wanted their children to feel comfortable and for providers to be well equipped for handling situations that might arise related to their children's disabilities.

Experiences in Child Care: Adequate Support for Children with Special Needs

Virtually all these parents told us about how challenging it was to find providers who they felt had adequate experience and/or training for working with children with special needs. Related to this, a number of parents told us about having been asked to remove their child



Their Ideal Child Care Situation

As might be expected, different families had different needs. About one third of these parents wanted partial or half-day care a few (2–3 days) a week; another third needed or wanted full-time care, though their desired hours varied; and some preferred to care for their own child at home but expressed a desire for flexible, drop-in, or weekend care, or any amount of care from providers experienced or educated in their children's disabilities.

These parents clearly expressed a desire for child care that would help them as parents, as well as their children, be ready to start kindergarten, noting concerns about their special-needs children being overwhelmed in kindergarten. Specific concerns included coping with stressful sensory situations and concerns about communication for children who are nonverbal. Six parents wanted their children to learn or improve their self-regulatory skills such as sitting in a circle, paying attention, listening, sharing, learning how to work with others, and learning how to take instruction. Further, many parents emphasized the importance of learning the social and other coping skills needed for routines, schedules, and transitions. These parents on the whole were more concerned with social aspects of readiness than with children learning pre-academic skills such as reading or writing.

from child care because the provider felt they “could not meet the child’s needs.” Parents described child care providers who were not trained to work with children experiencing disabilities, and noted specific instances of their children being suspended or expelled.

“They said they could no longer handle his needs and he was being removed from the program, and we were just left with no care and both of us working.”

“The first place flat out said he couldn’t come [anymore]. The second place made it really difficult to get back in after summer break...The third place he’s at currently, they’ve been suspending him pretty frequently. And saying, oh we don’t know if we can handle him so you should come and get him...[For all three providers], it suddenly doesn’t work out...that doesn’t do well for my son or for us with our jobs.”

Many parents had experienced policy limitations with accessing child care services for their children. Some parents wanted more support to help them connect to qualified providers who could allow them to have EI/ECSE services in tandem or within child care, or who could provide care around EI/ECSE service days. Many parents described wanting workable scheduling and availability, help with making decisions about available supports, and having information about or assistance with navigating systemic processes related to disability services.

“...with the early intervention, we only got 75 minutes twice a week, and it was almost more work to load everybody up and take him and drop him off, to have to turn around in 40 minutes or so and drive back.”

Other Challenges Finding Care

In addition to the challenge of finding providers with adequate experience or training in how to support children with disabilities, cost was also noted as a barrier to finding quality care for their children. Many parents highlighted the lack of qualified providers as a need in the community, describing the difficult job of providers and therapists working with children with disabilities.

“...a lot of these programs seem to be really understaffed. That’s really, honestly, when it comes right down to it, that’s really the reason why the availability is so low is because there’s not a lot of people...it’s just such a difficult job.”

Connected to availability, finding care that provided enough flexibility in schedules was also noted as a barrier, specifically with services related to their children's disabilities. Parents talked about limited schedule availability for Early Intervention/Early Childhood Special Education (EI/ECSE) services and needing to be able to juggle those schedules with other scheduling for child care arrangements and/or work.



Finding Appropriate Care

Finding appropriate care for their children experiencing disabilities was clearly challenging for a number of these parents, and one parent told us that she was never able to find appropriate care for her children. Those who had found care described making connections with services and providers through word of mouth with friends, family, or social media, as well as receiving help from various community nonprofits and referral resources. Information and referrals provided by other parents with children with disabilities were seen as one of the most helpful things for finding appropriate care.

“And a lot of it is like, who do you know...find that parent who is just a step ahead of you, and they have that lived experience [that they can share].”

“We also have EI/ECSE, but they only accept him for 2 hours 2 days a week. Now, I can’t go and work if I have to take him to school at 1:45 and pick him up at 3:45. My husband and I have to have full-time jobs to pay our bills. We can’t find another placement for our special-needs child that works with his special education ECSE—so, I guess that’s what we need.”

Compromising for Child Care

These parents described a number of compromises that they were making, or had made in the past, to get child care for their family. Some parents compromised because they could not find a provider they could afford who was qualified or trained to care for children with disabilities. Other parents described feeling uncomfortable asking family members to help care for their child, and placing children in child care instead. A few also described choosing to have friends or family care for their child because other child care options were too expensive. Most parents described some trade offs in which decisions in their households around work were made due to the high cost of child care. Four parents said that they had chosen not to work, and two parents said that they limited their work hours because child care was too expensive.

“I couldn’t leave him with family because nobody understood because of this invisible disability he has. They just think he’s being a bad child and he’s not. I had to go against my better judgement and have someone I didn’t know to watch my children while I was in the hospital.”

“We ended up not being able to afford daycare...So, [with my friend] there was no education, there was no structured this, that, or the other. She made sure the kids were alive at the end of the day, they were fed...That’s what they were doing, whatever worked, whatever she had and I got daycare that was affordable...”

Their Needs as Parents

When asked about what would help them to “be the best parent they could be”, most parents cited more time, money, and support as priorities. Parents also described wanting to have a more stable child care situation and having the same daily schedule, as something that could significantly reduce their day-to-day stress. Some parents also noted that while doctors and other professionals emphasized the importance of ensuring their children got additional support as early as possible, the lack of available appropriate care made them feel they were not meeting their children’s needs and added to parents’ stress:

"...the opposing feeling of doctors and research and the internet, and everybody saying the earliest you can get to everything the better, that message mixed with super-long wait lists, with super-low availability, made me feel like I was doing a horrible job and created this whole panic mode."

"...just somebody to tell people or other parents how to do an IFSP, cause a lot of that is difficult as all get out without any resources."

These parents talked about how important closing the gap between family needs and the disabilities services system would be to helping parents do the best they could as parents of children with special needs.

"Where the system is well intentioned to make everything work and everything function, and then you've got the people over here, the parents, who are basically trying to figure everything out, that are well intentioned, but there's that gap...it's not just passage of information, it's passage of experience. Just that experience back and forth, there's that gap where all the good intentions don't matter if they don't mix."

Creating Change Through Parent Advocacy

Parents talked about the need for parents to advocate for specific services for themselves and their children, and noted success when this happened. In particular, they described situations where the system responded to parents' requested needs for a particular service if many parents are asking for that service:

"[My son's service coordinator and I] were talking about one need he had in particular, and she was like—they all work in cubicles in an office—and they were like, oh, moms are talkin'! Cause they got like 10 moms calling in wanting the same thing for their service all of a sudden, and that's what they call it: moms are talkin'."

"But it's something I find really interesting with the system is that they know that they can provide—the service coordinators know that they can provide this [service]—but they can't tell the parents that they can provide it unless the parents ask for it. But the parents don't ask for it because they don't know it exists and they don't know that they can ask for it. So, as soon as one parent tells another parent, 'Oh, I get this service', it's like, 'Oh, moms are talkin'!'...However, if you don't know to say that and you don't know to ask for that [service], then they won't offer that or ask you."

Key Takeaways

- ▶ Parents need to be able to access information about early intervention, early childhood special education, and other community services for children experiencing disabilities.
- ▶ EI/ECSE service or other therapeutic service options that are provided within child care settings or in tandem with child care providers would allow parents to utilize those services more readily.
- ▶ Working parents need to have access to EI/ECSE services outside of work hours or in ways that accommodate the needs of dual income families
- ▶ More qualified and affordable child care providers are needed to care for children experiencing disabilities.

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Hearing from Parents About Their Child Care Needs

Coos Health and Wellness

In February of 2020, nine individual listening sessions were conducted with parents living in Coos Bay, North Bend, Brookings, and Hauser, Oregon (Coos and Curry counties) to learn about their experiences with, and needs for, child care in their community. The interview sessions were co-designed, planned, and conducted by researchers at OSLC Developments Inc., Portland State University, and Coos Health and Wellness. Eight parents were interviewed in English by phone, one mother responded to the questions in written form due to hearing loss. One parent was a person of color who reported also speaking Spanish at home. All parents have children with long-term healthcare needs and are receiving services through CaCoon, part of Coos Health and Wellness in Coos Bay. CaCoon is a program for families who have children with special healthcare needs, ages birth through 20 years of age.

Their Ideal Child Care

Safety and trustworthiness were important for all family's final decisions. Parents wanted to know that children's needs would be met. They also want to meet the providers and feel comfortable with the facility. To feel trust, parents highlighted the importance of finding providers who were experienced in working with children with special health care needs. These parents emphasized that providers must be well equipped for handling situations, which might arise, that are related to their children's disabilities; for some, providers who could help with children's basic self-care (toilet training and feeding) was important. Other factors that were important for families included having flexible schedules, being affordable, and getting their transportation needs met.

"I have a child with Autism and trying to find child care for him is difficult because not a lot of people are certified to be able to work with disabled kids like him."

"I need somebody who is experienced with children like him to be able to watch him."

"I was looking for a clean safe environment, looking to make sure there was enough staff. What types of things they teach the kids. Do they have the patience for a child with Autism? If staff is trained properly to deal with kids with hyperactivity or disabilities."



Supporting Learning at Home

These families reported a variety of ways that providers communicated with them about their child's progress and gave the family information and support that could help the child's learning at home. Only one parent indicated that the child's provider had not communicated with them about ways the parent could support the child's development. Some parents reported their provider gave them worksheets and specific suggestions about what they can help their child with, such as helping their child recognize the first letter of their name, writing their name, and handwriting skills.

Three parents' providers sent home information about how to help prevent tantrums and keep their bodies calm (self-regulation); other parents reported their providers encouraged the family to do things like helping their young children with potty training, talking, eating different foods, getting dressed, counting, and naming.

One parent had her father care for her children because she did not trust anyone, stating: **"this town is full of people who do drugs, so I only trust family."**

Although the majority of these parents expressed a preference for center-based care, two parents mentioned that their ideal location would be in their home—one adding "that way I know I could always look at the cameras I have set up all over always recording". Inclusive settings where parents could bring other siblings was also important for these parents.

Most of these parents wanted to have care during the work week, with all but two describing a preference for full day, even extended-care hours (6:00am to 6:30pm). Some also mentioned the need for irregular or flexible care hours to accommodate varying work schedules. One parent mentioned her provider offers 24/7 care and that this is very helpful. A desire for evening hours to allow parents to have "date night" was also expressed, perhaps reflecting the need for parental respite for these families.

Benefits of Early Learning Programs for Children

These parents described the importance of having early learning providers who could support their children's learning and help them be ready for kindergarten. Parents reported that most of their providers do social-skills activities such as teach them how to introduce themselves, participate in circle time, teach them to be safe, eat together, be patient, and share. One parent specifically mentioned that her child's preschool helps the kids talk through melt downs, teaches them what they can do to get through it, to use their words, and help manage their feelings. There was consensus among these parents that social interaction (e.g., how to get along with other kids and adults) was their main priority.

"Sending him to preschool (HS) was the best decision we made for him. I wish I would have known about it beforehand. I feel like he would have progressed so much if he were in it the whole time."

Other things they hoped children would learn included: basic early learning skills such as manners, respect, shapes, colors, numbers, letters, playing with others, and outdoor activities. Parents with children experiencing specific types of disability suggested that having providers who could help with speech and who had skills in helping children navigate their own emotional and behavioral challenges was important:

"My son, he's nonverbal, he's difficult but he's also very defiant in wanting to listen so what I would want is just him learning the basics, getting through everyday life. We're still working on that. That's been the hardest part."

Compromising for Child Care

All of the parents but one said that they had chosen not to work at some point because they could not find child care that they trusted or could afford. Complications included transportation and changes in their work schedule that could not be worked out with the provider. Another reported that it was not feasible for the second parent to work due to the high cost of the Employment Related Day Care (ERDC) copayment. Having multiple children that needed care was also a factor in choosing not to work and to provide the child care themselves instead.

"I would try to work when their dad got home from like after 5 and I would be gone until 10 and when my hours changed, to go in a 2 or noon. I pretty much had to stop working because the child care and babysitters were going to be more than I was making out of my check, like more than I would even bring home."

"It's so hard to get in anywhere because there are so many low-income families, that the child care here is packed up. I want to go back to work but I also don't want to go back to work just to pay somebody to babysit and not have money left over to pay my bills."

"I don't remember what they quoted me because of our income it was basically all of our paycheck."

About one half the parents said they felt they had to make compromises in what they were looking for, and ultimately either chose to care for children at home or ended up placing children in settings that were not ideal. The lack of affordable options in experienced, licensed-care settings was seen as a barrier to finding the kind of high-quality, trusting environment these families wanted.

"A lot of them [providers] were not on the bus route, a lot of them cost way too much. It was weird it was like every person I would call would be least one of these problems, at least. It's like which one do I compromise? Which one do I choose to compromise, choose for a daycare provider? That was a nightmare."

Several parents described negative experiences in care (one of which has since been closed):

"He came home with fingerprint bruises on his arm. They didn't understand his different needs."

"We literally could not find reliable child care. We had our child care provider calling in sick and wanting more money. It became this really odd situation with money. It was like well, you need to pay me this much more. It was dirty, it's a very dirty subject here because the scandals, I hate to put it that way but it's true."



Challenges Finding Child Care

With the exception of one parent who reported extensive family support, all of these parents mentioned having varying degrees of difficulty finding child care. Two parents said that they literally could not find any care for their children experiencing disabilities. Challenges were related primarily to cost and a general lack of care options, as parents described many providers as not certified, trained, or willing to provide care to children experiencing disabilities. Parents talked about the lack of registered or certified providers in the area, and the experience of being put on long waitlists.

"There's a lot of places that don't accept children with complications, I feel like when I call somewhere and get information on child care or daycare they get intimidated when I say I have a child with Down's Syndrome but my kid's a typical child."

"One of the child care facilities around here got shut down for abuse and neglect of the children. When you find out that this person is a new daycare opening up and they worked at that facility, it's like do we really you trust you? It was a scary time for us moms looking for it."

"It was hard, you know being a mom you always want the best for your child, kids with special needs are way more difficult to handle. My biggest things were that the classrooms were too big she wouldn't get that individual attention she needed. Either it was too expensive or it didn't have enough staff members to keep an eye on all the kids at once."

Information and Decision Making About Child Care

When looking for child care, most of the parents reported that they got information about child care providers from word of mouth from family, online reviews, and information gained from in-person observations. Other parents got the information about the provider through community agencies such as DHS, WIC, OHF, Coos Health & Wellness, and Coos County Mental Health. A few mentioned receiving information from their doctor's office, their ESD Family Coordinators, and from other parents with children with disabilities. Many of these parents relied on the internet and social media for recommendations and information:

"Googling the reviews from the other parents was a really big help as well. When a parent goes through that [negative] experience of daycare, they're not going to want to send other kids there so for me listening to another parent voice was a milestone of that."

"Friends I have in the workplace, people who know other families with special needs children. I have a Facebook page that I'm on, The Autism Society of Coos County. They can really help out as far as finding child care in the area, I guess you can say word of mouth."

Many parents, however, had difficulty finding and keeping consistent care with qualified or experienced providers even when they had information or connections to potential providers.

"It was helpful that the 211 number, WorkSource Oregon gave us information on people in the area but they were people who weren't accepting Special Needs. It would be helpful if they could update their registry of providers' references and also the provider's cost information."

"CPS, DHS, or WIC would be a really good resource for child care. They should be able to have a list of people that are on their payroll. We have no resources here we don't have a link. That would really help people."

Experiences Being Asked to Leave Care

Only one parent reported having had this experience, expressing that she had to find another provider due to the provider not having enough disability training. The remaining participants did not share this experience, although many of them remarked that this was likely because they chose not to enroll their child with providers who were not trained to work with their children experiencing disabilities.

Experiences of Discrimination or Bias

In response to the question about whether they felt their provider created opportunities to highlight their family background and traditions, these predominantly White parents either said it was not something that was ever done or thought of—nor was it relevant to their family or that their provider recognized their child's birthday, Christmas, or Thanksgiving holidays as examples of family culture. One exception to this was a parent whose caregiver was the child's grandfather, who: "respects what I want for my kids. We are Indian and African American, and Mexican. When he is cooking, making tacos, he teaches my son about this."

Two families felt that they had been treated in a way that was disrespectful of themselves or their family culture. One of these families was a Spanish-speaking mother from a Latinx background; the other described feeling disrespected when her child's teacher contacted CPS instead of asking her about a concern she had for the child.

"When he went to the last preschool he will never go to again, they only focused on White/Caucasian. Like the posters are only White people. A lot of the things in the classroom are focused on White, in the books: White kids."

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Hearing from Parents About Their Child Care Needs

Doulas Latinas International

In December 2019, a listening session with parents was held in Woodburn, Oregon to learn about their needs for, and experiences with, child care in their community. The sessions were co-designed, planned, and hosted by Doula Latinas International and by researchers from AB Cultural Drivers, OSLC Developments, Inc., and Portland State University. Thirteen parents attended the session, 9 mothers and 4 fathers currently living in Woodburn. Parents had come to Oregon from various areas of Mexico (Oaxaca, Guanajuato, and Jalisco) as well as California. The listening session was conducted in Spanish.

Current Child Care Experiences and Building School Readiness

Who currently takes care of your children ages 0-5 years and what activities do they do?

The majority of these parents told us that their children are cared for by their mothers, and about one half said they have other family members, friends, or neighbors care for their children. More than one half of the parents also have their children cared for by an in-home provider (some with a license, some without), and fewer than one half had children attending more formal child care centers. Parents described a number of different activities that the children do with their caregivers such as art, cooking, playing, writing and reading, and science and math activities (STEM). Almost all of the parents said that caregivers provided culturally specific activities as well. For example, one parent shared that, for the class celebration of the Day of the Dead, the teachers asked that the children bring in a picture for the altar. Finally, parents talked about the activities caregivers did to help children develop social and other school readiness skills, including helping children learn to do activities with other children, communicate their needs, and express themselves.

Do child care providers speak Spanish with the children?

Most parents generally said yes to this question, but one parent expressed concern that at a local center (OCDC):

"...currently a lot of the Spanish is being lost. People who work there do not speak Spanish in the school, and there are fewer teachers who speak Spanish, only the teaching assistants."

Two mothers speak indigenous languages (Mixteco and Zapoteco) and expressed that there are no caregivers who speak these languages. This makes it hard for their children to learn or want to speak these languages. There are also parents that expressed difficulties communicating due to their lack of English-language knowledge.

"...actualmente se esta perdiendo mucho el español, las personas que trabajan ahí no hablan en Español en la escuela, hay menos maestras q hablan en español, solo las ayudantes de profesoras."



Where would you like your care to be?

Parents wanted care that was conveniently located, in town, close to home or work.

Also parents wanted a location that offered good experiences for their children. One parent wanted a location near a park or at a center with its own park. Another wanted a location that has “all the educational toys for a child.”

What time or days of the week would you like your child to be in care?

As might be expected, different families had different needs:

- ▶ Some parents wanted full time care: 5am-5pm, Monday through Friday.
- ▶ Parents with younger children wanted some care, a few hours at a time, not all day.
- ▶ Parents who are farm workers wanted care after school and during summer time.
- ▶ One parent wanted access to Saturday care “so the kids won’t be watching TV and playing with phones all day.”

Their Ideal Child Care Situation

What kinds of educational, artistic, and other activities would you like your children to receive to help them prepare for kindergarten?

All parents were interested in making sure children had these kind of activities. Parents said that activities like this can help support social outcomes (like shyness, learning to be proud of themselves), provide culture and language exposure, support basic academic skills, develop a school routine, and identify if a child needs more support in their learning (e.g., speech therapy, attention deficit). Parents also described enrichment activities they would like to see added to their child’s child care experiences, such as music, dancing, cooking, physical education, gymnastics, languages, sports, cultural activities, and swimming.

To what extent do you think it is important for caregivers to help you and your child be more prepared to start kindergarten?

All parents shared that these kinds of supports would be valuable, and specifically said that they would appreciate having workshops about the kindergarten transition and how to motivate children to go to and enjoy school.

“It’s important to have talks and workshops for kindergarten readiness preparedness. It’s not the same to be in preschool as in kindergarten, as there are differences and parents would like to know them.”

“Es importante tener pláticas para la preparación del kínder, no es lo mismo estar en preescolar que en kínder. Hay diferencias que como padres nos gusta conocerlas.”

“Sometimes as parents, we don’t know how to talk to our kids so they can be motivated. Educators give us tips on how to motivate our children and prepare them for the next grade.”

“A veces como padres, no sabemos como hablarles para que se motiven, los educadores nos dan consejos de como motivar a los niños y prepararlos para el siguiente grado.”

Parents also talked about the importance of both parents being able to work as a team to support their child’s education at home. But there are some challenges that parents experience with helping their children at home.

One mom shared that with “picking them up, cooking, and bathing, there is no time for homework.”

“mientras que les recoge, cocine, baño, no hay tiempo para la tarea.”



“Tuve la experiencia que la profesora le insulto a mi hija porque la niña puso el cepillo de dientes en su escupido y la maestra le dijo: ‘hay niña como eres tan cochina’ y mi hija desde ahí dejó de hablar y lloraba, no quería ir a la escuela. Yo tuve de testigo a la ayudante de la maestra que me conto lo que había pasado. Mi niña al centro no quería ir.”

La mama hablo con la directora, y ella le dijo que si tiene testigos tiene q traerla, y con pruebas, la ayudante no quiso testificar, y mama decidió no llevarle otra vez a la escuela.

“La niña por mucho tiempo en la escuela dejó de hablar, se puso tímida y con baja autoestima.”

Finding Appropriate Care

Most parents relied on references from friends and neighbors to find care in the past. However, some of those recommendations have not gone well. Parents noted, for example, that a caregiver may have a license to care for children, but that does not necessarily mean that caregiver will take good care of the children or teach them things. Some parents shared that caregivers they have had in the past have ignored or disrespected the children in their care. Parents in this community have had to compromise quality in their search for available, affordable care.

One parent shared a story of a time her child was disrespected in the classroom and her concerns were dismissed by the head of the center:

“...I had the experience that a teacher insulted my daughter because she put her toothbrush on her spit and the teacher said to her: ‘you’re a dirty girl.’ Since then my daughter stopped talking and cried when going to school, she didn’t want to go to school. I had as a witness the assistant teacher who told me what had happened. My daughter didn’t want to go back to the center.”

The parent talked to the principal who told her that if she had witnesses, she must bring them to testify. The assistant did not want to testify, and the parent decided not to take her child back to school.

“For a long time, [my child] stopped talking at school, became shy and had low self-esteem.”

What information or help would you like to have in the future to make a good decision about child care?

Parents shared that they would like to know how many children are cared for at a location, what activities are available, what they feed the children, what safety measures are in place, and how they supervise children. A few parents were concerned about how caregivers are held accountable by the state licensing process. For example, one parent wished that caregivers would be evaluated by the state before being given a license, while another shared the story of a provider that would feed the children enough food when the liscencer visited, but did not give the children enough food when not observed by the state. One parent wished that there were more people who knew how to care for children.

Have you ever had to leave work to take care of your children because paying to care for them is too expensive?

Six parents of the 13 parents said they had to leave work to care for children because of the expense of child care. Five of those parents were mothers and one father. A couple of mothers shared that they tried working, but child care was so expensive that their whole checks went to child care. It was not worth it in their minds, so they chose to stay home. One single mom shared that even though care is so expensive, she has no choice but to pay for it so that she can go to work.

Their Needs as Parents

What would help you be the best mom or dad you can be?

A few parents talked about the importance of having their own mothers available to them as a source of parenting advice. One parent who is in a home-visiting program through ODCD wished other parents had the information and support she has (parent education, educational materials, and educational activities guidance). There is a need for homework support and parent education to be able to support their children with education at home. A few parents wished that they had the capacity and patience to better support their children through challenges.

What other resources would you ask for?

Many parents wished that after-school programs offered more homework assistance. Four parents requested classes in the summer and weekends to help their kids keep learning. Parents also requested particular topics: math tutoring; formal (written, oral, writing) Spanish and other language classes with fully bilingual and, ideally, bicultural teachers (not only Spanish-speaking assistants); and non-academic classes like arts and gardening. Other parents shared that they would like more money, resources to travel and get to know other cultures, and parenting workshops.

Parents with children with special needs faced additional barriers to receiving quality care and noted that:

- ▶ Child care providers would benefit from more training in identifying children with special needs (one parent reported that her child was called "lazy", but in fact she has an attention deficit disorder that was not diagnosed until she was age 7 years).
- ▶ The referral process for services can be slow.
- ▶ Speech therapy may not be provided in Spanish (child's native language).

Key Takeaways

- ▶ These parents valued enrichment activities and development of social skills for children and were interested in child care providers supporting these and learning about more they could do at home; parents also held a high value for culturally specific activities and language acquisition (English, Spanish, and indigenous mother languages) being supported at child care.
- ▶ Parents were concerned that lead teachers may not speak Spanish to their children, and that caregivers with regional indigenous languages were not available to their children.
- ▶ Parents were challenged by the cost of care, which often exceeds what they make at work and forces mothers to stop working.
- ▶ Parents described the need for more reliable sources and specific information about child care providers to help them make their decisions about care. Some specific information parents shared would help them make their decisions included teacher-child ratios, activities available, and licence information.
- ▶ These parents underscored the importance of having both parents (if appropriate) being involved in parenting education and supports.
- ▶ These families relied strongly on family caregiver networks, both for child care and for parenting advice; supporting extended families (grandparents in particular) may be particularly important in this community.
- ▶ Parent experiences suggest that child care providers need more help identifying and making referrals for children with special needs, and the need for culturally and linguistically appropriate services for early developmental concerns.

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Opiniones de padres sobre el cuidado infantil

Doulas Latinas International

En diciembre de 2019, se llevó a cabo una sesión de conversación comunitaria con padres en Woodburn, Oregon, para conocer sus necesidades de cuidado infantil y sus experiencias al respecto en la comunidad. La sesión fue codiseñada, planificada y organizada por Doulas Latinas International y por investigadores de AB Cultural Drivers y de la Universidad Estatal de Portland. A la sesión, asistieron 13 padres (9 mujeres y 4 hombres) que actualmente viven en Woodburn. Los padres habían llegado a Oregon desde diversas áreas de México (Oaxaca, Guanajuato y Jalisco), como también desde California. La conversación comunitaria se llevó a cabo en español.

Experiencias actuales con el cuidado infantil y desarrollo de la preparación escolar

¿Quién cuida actualmente a sus hijos de 0 a 5 años y qué actividades realizan?

La mayoría de los padres nos informaron que a sus hijos los cuidan sus madres, y alrededor de la mitad dijo que tienen otros familiares, amigos o vecinos que cuidan a sus hijos. Más de la mitad de los padres también cuentan con un proveedor de cuidado en casa (algunos con licencia, otros sin licencia) que cuida a sus hijos, y menos de la mitad dijo tener hijos que asisten a centros de cuidado infantil más formales. Los padres describieron unas cuantas actividades diferentes que los niños realizan con sus cuidadores, como arte, cocina, juegos, escritura y lectura, y actividades relacionadas con ciencias y matemáticas (Ciencia, Tecnología, Ingeniería y Matemáticas [STEM, por sus siglas en inglés]). Casi todos los padres dijeron que los cuidadores también proporcionan actividades específicas desde el punto de vista cultural. Por ejemplo, un padre habló sobre la celebración en clase del Día de los Muertos y comentó que los maestros les pidieron a los niños que traigan una fotografía para el altar. Por último, los padres hablaron sobre las actividades que realizaron los cuidadores para que los niños puedan desarrollar habilidades sociales y otras habilidades de preparación escolar, como ayudar a los niños a aprender a realizar actividades con otros niños, a comunicar sus necesidades y a expresarse.

¿Hablan los proveedores de cuidado infantil español con los niños?

La mayoría de los padres respondieron de manera afirmativa, pero un padre expresó su preocupación por que en un centro local (Coalición de Desarrollo Infantil de Oregon [OCDC, por sus siglas en inglés]):

“...actualmente se está perdiendo mucho el español, las personas que trabajan ahí no hablan en español en la escuela, hay menos maestras que hablan en español, solo las ayudantes de profesoras.”

Dos madres hablan idiomas indígenas (Mixteco y Zapoteco) y manifestaron que no hay cuidadores que hablen esos idiomas. Esto dificulta que sus hijos aprendan a hablar dichos idiomas o quieran hablarlos. También hay padres que expresaron dificultades para comunicarse debido a su falta de conocimiento del idioma inglés.

Su situación ideal de cuidado infantil

¿Qué tipos de actividades educativas, artísticas y de otro tipo les gustaría que sus hijos reciban para ayudarlos a prepararse para el kínder?

Todos los padres se mostraron interesados en asegurarse de que los niños tuvieran esos tipos de actividades. Los padres dijeron que esas actividades pueden permitir apoyar los resultados sociales (como timidez, aprender a sentirse orgullosos de sí mismos), proporcionar exposición a culturas e idiomas, apoyar las habilidades académicas básicas, desarrollar una rutina escolar e identificar si un niño necesita más apoyo en su aprendizaje (ej., terapia del habla, déficit de atención). Los padres también describieron las actividades de enriquecimiento que les gustaría ver que se agregaran a las experiencias de cuidado infantil de sus hijos, como música, baile, cocina, educación física, gimnasia, idiomas, deportes, actividades culturales y natación.

¿En qué medida consideran que es importante que los cuidadores los ayuden a ustedes y a sus hijos a estar más preparados para comenzar el kínder?

Todos los padres indicaron que estos tipos de apoyos serían valiosos y, específicamente, dijeron que agradecerían contar con talleres sobre la transición al kínder y sobre cómo motivar a los niños a ir a la escuela y disfrutarla.

“Es importante tener pláticas y talleres para la preparación del kínder. No es lo mismo estar en preescolar que en kínder, ya que hay diferencias y a los padres les gustaría conocerlas.”

“A veces, como padres, no sabemos cómo hablarles a nuestros hijos para que se motiven. Los educadores nos dan consejos de cómo motivar a nuestros niños y prepararlos para el siguiente grado.”

Los padres también hablaron sobre la importancia de que tanto el padre como la madre puedan trabajar en equipo para apoyar la educación de sus hijos en el hogar. Sin embargo, los padres enfrentan algunos desafíos en cuanto a brindarles ayuda a sus hijos en el hogar.

Una mamá comentó que “mientras que los recoge, les cocina y los baña, no queda tiempo para ayudarlos con las tareas para el hogar.”



¿Dónde les gustaría que se preste el cuidado infantil?

Los padres querían que el cuidado se prestara en un lugar conveniente, en la ciudad, cerca del hogar o del trabajo.

Además, los padres querían un lugar que ofreciera buenas experiencias para sus hijos. Un padre quería un lugar cerca de un parque o en un centro que tuviera parque propio. Otro quería un lugar que tuviera “todos los juguetes educativos necesarios para un niño.”

¿En qué horarios o días de la semana les gustaría que sus hijos estén bajo cuidado?

Como era de esperar, las distintas familias tenían necesidades diferentes:

- ▶ Algunos padres querían cuidado a tiempo completo: de 5am a 5 pm, de lunes a viernes.
- ▶ Los padres con niños más pequeños querían contar con cuidado infantil durante cierto tiempo, algunas horas por momentos, no todo el día.
- ▶ Los padres que son trabajadores agrícolas querían contar con cuidado infantil después de la escuela y durante el verano.
- ▶ Un padre quería acceso a cuidado infantil los sábados “para que los niños no miren televisión ni jueguen con sus teléfonos todo el día.”



Sus necesidades como padres

¿Qué los ayudaría a desempeñar sus roles de padres de la mejor manera posible?

Algunos padres hablaron sobre la importancia de contar con sus propias madres como fuente de consejos sobre la crianza de niños. Una madre que estaba en un programa de visitas en casa mediante el ODCD deseaba que otros padres tuvieran la información y el apoyo que ella tiene (educación para padres, materiales educativos y orientación sobre actividades educativas). Se necesita apoyo con las tareas para el hogar y educación para padres para poder ayudar a los hijos con la educación en el hogar. Algunos padres deseaban tener la capacidad y la paciencia para brindarles a sus hijos un mejor apoyo cuando enfrentan desafíos.

Encontrar el cuidado infantil adecuado *continuado*

La mayoría de los padres confiaron en referencias de amigos y vecinos para encontrar cuidado infantil en el pasado. Sin embargo, algunas de esas recomendaciones no han dado buenos resultados. Los padres notaron, por ejemplo, que un cuidador puede tener una licencia para cuidar niños, pero eso no necesariamente significa que el cuidador los cuidará bien o les enseñará cosas. Algunos padres comentaron que los cuidadores que han tenido en el pasado han ignorado a los niños bajo su cuidado o les han faltado el respeto. Los padres de esta comunidad han tenido que comprometer la calidad en su búsqueda de cuidado infantil disponible y asequible.

Una madre contó una historia de una vez en que le faltaron el respeto a su hija en el salón de clases y comentó que sus inquietudes fueron desestimadas por la directora del centro:

“...tuve la experiencia de que la maestra insultó a mi hija porque ella puso el cepillo de dientes donde había escupido y la maestra le dijo: “ay, niña cómo eres tan cochina.” Desde ahí, mi hija dejó de hablar y lloraba cuando tenía que ir a la escuela; no quería ir a la escuela. Tuve de testigo a la ayudante de la maestra que me contó lo que había pasado. Mi hija no quería volver al centro.”

La madre habló con la directora, y ella le dijo que, si tenía testigos, debía presentarlos para que testificaran. La ayudante de la maestra no quiso testificar, y la madre decidió no volver a llevar a su hija a la escuela.

“Durante mucho tiempo, [mi hija] dejó de hablar en la escuela, se volvió tímida y con baja autoestima.”

¿Qué información o ayuda les gustaría tener en el futuro para tomar una buena decisión sobre el cuidado infantil?

Los padres comentaron que les gustaría saber cuántos niños están bajo cuidado en un lugar, qué actividades están disponibles, qué se les da de comer a los niños, qué medidas de seguridad se implementan y cómo supervisan a los niños. Algunos padres manifestaron preocupación por cómo el proceso para obtener una licencia estatal responsabiliza a los cuidadores. Por ejemplo, un padre deseaba que los cuidadores sean evaluados por un representante del estado antes de obtener una licencia, mientras que otros contaron la historia de un proveedor que les daba a los niños alimentos suficientes cuando un representante del estado visitaba el lugar para realizar una observación, pero no pasaba el resto de los días. Un padre deseaba que hubiera más personas que supieran cómo cuidar niños.

¿Han tenido alguna vez que dejar de trabajar para cuidar a sus hijos porque el cuidado infantil era demasiado costoso?

Seis padres de los 13 padres dijeron que habían tenido que dejar de trabajar para cuidar a sus hijos debido al costo del cuidado infantil. Había cinco mujeres y un hombre entre esos padres. Un par de madres comentaron que intentaron trabajar, pero el cuidado infantil era tan costoso que absorbía todo su sueldo. Pensaban que no valía la pena, así que decidieron quedarse en casa. Una madre soltera comentó que, aunque el cuidado es muy costoso, no tiene más alternativa que pagar para poder ir a trabajar.

Sus necesidades como padres

¿Qué otros recursos pedirían?

Muchos padres deseaban que los programas extracurriculares ofrecieran más ayuda con las tareas para el hogar. Cuatro padres solicitaron clases durante el verano y los fines de semana para ayudar a sus hijos a seguir aprendiendo. Los padres también solicitaron temas específicos: tutorías de matemáticas, clases formales de español (escrito, oral, escritura) y de otros idiomas con maestros completamente bilingües y, de ser posible, biculturales (no solo ayudantes que hablen español), y clases no académicas, como arte y jardinería. Otros padres comentaron que les gustaría tener más dinero, más recursos para viajar y llegar a conocer otras culturas, y talleres sobre la crianza de niños.

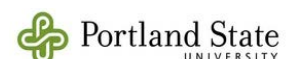
Los padres con hijos con necesidades especiales se enfrentaron a otras barreras para recibir cuidado infantil de calidad e indicaron que:

- ▶ Los proveedores de cuidado infantil se beneficiarían de contar con más capacitación para identificar a niños con necesidades especiales (una madre informó que a su hija le decían “perezosa”, pero, de hecho, tenía un trastorno de déficit de atención que no le diagnosticaron hasta los 7 años de edad).
- ▶ El proceso de remisión a los servicios puede ser lento.
- ▶ Es posible que la terapia del habla no se proporcione en español (idioma nativo del niño).

Aportes clave

- ▶ Estos padres valoraron las actividades de enriquecimiento y el desarrollo de habilidades sociales para los niños, y se mostraron interesados en los proveedores de cuidado infantil que apoyan eso y en conocer más sobre lo que podrían hacer en el hogar; los padres también valoraron mucho que, en el entorno de cuidado infantil, se apoyen las actividades específicas desde el punto de vista cultural y la adquisición de idiomas (inglés, español e idiomas maternos indígenas).
- ▶ Los padres expresaron preocupación por el hecho de que los maestros principales no puedan hablar en español con sus hijos y de que no hubiera disponibles cuidadores para sus hijos que hablaran idiomas indígenas regionales.
- ▶ Los padres enfrentan el desafío del costo del cuidado infantil, que suele superar lo que ganan en el trabajo y obliga a las madres a dejar de trabajar.
- ▶ Los padres describieron la necesidad de fuentes más confiables y de información específica sobre proveedores de cuidado infantil que les permita tomar decisiones al respecto. Parte de la información específica que compartieron los padres los ayudaría a tomar sus decisiones, como proporción entre maestros y cantidad de niños, actividades disponibles e información sobre la obtención de la licencia.
- ▶ Estos padres hicieron hincapié en la importancia de que tanto la madre como el padre (si corresponde) participen en los apoyos y la educación en crianza de niños.
- ▶ Estas familias dependían mucho de las redes familiares de cuidadores, tanto para el cuidado infantil como para los consejos sobre la crianza de niños; el apoyo de la familia extendida (de los abuelos en particular) puede ser especialmente importante en esta comunidad.
- ▶ Las experiencias de los padres sugieren que los proveedores de cuidado infantil necesitan más ayuda para identificar y realizar remisiones de niños con necesidades especiales, como también la necesidad de contar con servicios adecuados desde el punto de vista cultural y lingüístico en relación con las inquietudes sobre desarrollo temprano.

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Family Listening Session

Hearing from Parents About Their Child Care Needs

Doulas Latinas International

In January 2020, a listening session with parents was held in Hillsboro, Oregon to learn about their needs for, and experiences with, child care in their community. This listening session was part of a series of family listening sessions funded by the Preschool Development Grant as a part of a statewide early learning needs assessment. The goal of the listening sessions was to hear family voices that have not yet been captured in understanding families' early learning needs and experiences. This session was co-designed, planned and hosted by Doula Latinas International and by researchers from AB Cultural Drivers, OSLC Developments, Inc., and Portland State University. Eleven mothers attended the session, currently living in Hillsboro. The mothers had come to Oregon from Mexico. The listening session was conducted in Spanish.

Current Child Care Experiences and Building School Readiness

Who currently takes care of your children ages 0-5 years and what activities do they do?

In addition to taking care of their children themselves, six mothers have their children in preschool, three have friends and neighbors who help, and two rely on family members. The mothers described a number of different activities that the children do with their caregivers such as drawing, playing, singing, playing musical instruments, watching TV and playing video games, going for walks to the park, going shopping, and spending time with other children. Many caregivers speak Spanish with the children but do not celebrate their families' traditions or culture. Finally, mothers talked about the activities caregivers do to help children develop social and other school readiness skills, including helping children learn to share and take turns with other children, do activities with other children, respect others, recognize and interpret their emotions, and express themselves.

Not every care provider offers learning opportunities to these families' children. One mother said, "if I leave my daughter with my neighbor, she is not prepared to take care of the children, she doesn't do activities with my daughter." Another shared, "Sometimes we turn to the neighbors or a friend because we can't afford quality of care, like a child care center. You see the difference when you take the kids to a child care center versus when they are cared for by a family member, a neighbor, or a friend."

This shows that some mothers needed to choose between affordability of care and quality of care for their children.

"Si le dejo a cuidar a mi vecina, ella no esta preparada a cuidar niños, ella no hace actividades con mi niña. En la escuela si les enseñan mucho a los niños."

"A veces recurrimos a la vecina o amiga porque no podemos pagar algo más de calidad, como un centro, se ve la diferencia cuando se le lleva a los niños a un centro y cuando los cuida un familiar o una vecina o amiga."

Where would you like your care to be?

The mothers wanted care that was close to their home, with providers who speak Spanish. They wanted a place with “room for children to play, a large playground and structure for physical exercise” and “diverse activities.”

They were concerned about the ratio of teachers per child, wanting “5 to 8 children [per teacher] depending on age.” Six mothers said that they would like to take their kids to care, and five mothers said that they would like their children to get there using transportation.

What time or days of the week would you like your child to be in care?

As might be expected, different families had different needs:

A few mothers wanted care Mondays through Fridays, though their desired hours varied. One mother wanted 9am-12pm, another wanted care 8am-5pm, and yet another wanted 6am-4pm.

Four mothers were not working and weren't looking for any care. Mothers had a difficult time finding care outside of traditional work hours. For example, one mother noted, “There is no care in the evenings. For example, when my other baby was born I was looking for someone to stay two nights with my other child.” She struggled to find that short-term support when she needed it.

“No hay cuidado de noche; por ejemplo, cuando mi otro bebe nació estaba buscando por dos noches para que se quede con mi otro hijo.”

Their Ideal Child Care Situation

What would you like your children to learn?

One mother said, “Providers should tell children about our culture and where we are coming from, learn to make meals from our country, folk dances, learn my dialect. Head Start should be a dual or bilingual program, more bilingual staff, should teach them arts, and sports like soccer or some physical sports corresponding to the child's age. They should have nutritious meals, and provide fruits and vegetables to the children.”

“Que los proveedores les hablen de nuestra cultura y de las raíces de donde somos, aprendan hacer comidas típicas, bailes folclóricos, que aprendan mi propio dialecto, que el Head Start sea dual o bilingüe, que haya más personal bilingüe, que le enseñen a hacer arte, deportes: futbol, algún deporte físico que los niños pueden hacer acorde de su edad. Que sea la comida más nutritiva, les den frutas y vegetales a los niños.”

Why is it important for your children to have educational, artistic, and other activities to help them prepare for kindergarten?

One mother shared that “it's very important for a school-age child to learn in a group...to socialize, to spend time together, to learn to share with other children...the children do not go to school scared, because they know what they are going to be taught.”

“Es muy importante que un niño de edad escolar aprenda en grupo...a socializar, a convivir, a aprender a compartir con otros niños. Los niños no van con tanto miedo a la escuela, porque ellos saben que les van a enseñar.”

Another mother said that these activities can help “identify if the children have any special needs and what their strengths and skills are.”

“Identificar si hay alguna necesidad especial e identificar cuáles son las fortalezas y habilidades que los niños tienen.”

How have caregivers helped you and your child be more prepared to start kindergarten?

Most mothers said that their caregivers have helped prepare them and their children for the start of kindergarten. One mother said that their caregivers recommend “taking [her child] to the school they are planning to attend before they start school, having a school tour,” and supporting basic academic skills (e.g., colors, numbers, writing their name) at home. Other mothers said that their caregivers help their children with basic responsibilities, like, “[going] to the bathroom alone before kindergarten”; “[dressing] themselves”; and “[picking] up their plate, their toys, and [taking] their trash out.”

Why is it important to find providers that speak Spanish? Is it difficult to find providers who speak Spanish?

Many mothers agreed that it is important to have providers that speak Spanish so that “our children speak the language. Children sometimes don’t want to speak Spanish anymore, just English.”

“...nuestros niños hablen el idioma, a veces los niños no quieren hablar ya el español solo el inglés.”

Three mothers shared that it is difficult to find providers who speak Spanish:

“...almost everyone speaks English here. The Hispanic community is small, there are fewer Hispanics, so we are the minority.”

“...casi todos hablan ingles aquí. La comunidad de hablo Hispana es baja, hay menos hispanos, somos minoría.”

“Hispanic providers can’t be found on the internet.”

“Los proveedores hispanos no lo encontramos en la internet.”

“The cultural diversity is so much that they can’t speak Spanish, but [providers] speak Chinese or other non-Spanish languages. More providers are needed who speak Spanish.”

“La diversidad cultural es tanta que no pueden hablar español, pero por ejemplo hablan chino o otros idiomas que no son español. Se necesita más proveedores que hablen español.”

Finding Appropriate Care

Many mothers said that they rely on friends who have already been through the process of finding child care to help them find care. One mother shared that she found child care information through “coworkers, the internet, a mother’s group, and [by] calling 211.” The last was new information to most of the mothers, who did not know that they could call 211 for information about child care.

What information or help would you like to have in the future to make a good decision about child care?

In addition to referrals from other families, personal friends, and coworkers, a mother shared that pricing info is very important, particularly for bilingual schools, which are more expensive. Another mother shared that availability information is very important because “many places have a waitlist.” The mothers would look to advertisements (online and flyers) for this information, and one said “there should be a specific website for this information.”

Have you ever felt that the people who care for your children disrespect you or your child?

Four mothers in the session shared examples of their children being disrespected by their caregivers. Two mothers’ concerns had to do with the quality of supervision and the communication they received from the caregivers:

“One day my child was playing in the school’s playground, my son came to the house, he looked different and went to sleep. I wondered: did anything happen at school? I called the school and the teacher told me that the child had fallen but it wasn’t serious...I took him to the hospital to be checked, since then, I don’t trust her because the caregiver didn’t tell me the truth.”

“Una vez mi niño estaba en la área de juegos en la escuela, mi hijo llego a la casa diferente y se fue a dormir, me pregunte: algo paso en la escuela? llame a la escuela y la maestra me dijo que el niño se había caído pero no fue grave, la maestra no le aviso a su mama. Mama lo llevo al hospital para chequearlo, yo desde entonces tenía desconfianza del cuidador por no decirme la verdad.”

“[A child] threw wood in [my son’s] eyes and face...When I called the teacher, she just said ‘They’re just playing kids’ games.’”

“...le echaron madera en los ojos y en la cara...cuando mama la llama a la maestra. Ella solo dijo: Son juegos de niños, solo estaban jugando.”

One mother shared an example of a Head Start teacher who was disrespectful to many families:

“The same person yelled at me...the lady had problems with several families, and there were families who volunteered at school and you could see the rejection from the teacher.”

“La misma persona me grito...la señora tenia problemas con varias familias, y era familias que están de voluntarias en la escuela y se veía el rechazo de la maestra.”

One mother was concerned about her son's language not being respected in the classroom, saying, "...he did not speak English at school, and he could not express himself."

"...no habla Ingles en la escuela, no podia expresarse el mismo."

Have you ever had to leave work to take care of your children because paying to care for them is too expensive?

Four mothers said they had to leave work to care for children because of the expense of child care. Two mothers shared that what they were making at their job was essentially what they were paying their babysitter.

Their Needs as Parents

What would help you be the best mom or dad you can be?

Many mothers wished they had more resources to help them take care of their children. One asked for Spanish books on child development, three asked for parent trainings on a variety of topics (e.g., cognitive development, cooking for picky eaters) in Spanish to help prepare them to care for children, and two parents specifically wanted to know more about parenting than their own parents did to avoid "repeating the same patterns."

One new mother had no information about how to care for her new baby. She said, "I ask my neighbor and friend how to change diapers, how to breastfeed, the basic things."

"...le pido ayuda a mi vecina y amiga como cambiar los pañales, como darle de lactar, las cosas básicas."

Other mothers wished they had more patience with their children, help with housework, and better understanding of their teen children.

Key Takeaways

- ▶ These mothers valued activities that help prepare their children for kindergarten, particularly social activities that help them learn to interact with other children and gain confidence in a school setting; they also held a high value for culturally specific activities, but none of their care providers do activities to celebrate their children's culture or traditions.
- ▶ These mothers struggle to find care providers who speak Spanish, and they are concerned about their children not being able to express themselves during care, or not wanting to speak Spanish at all anymore. Dual and bilingual programs are desired.
- ▶ These mothers highlighted that care providers should serve their children healthy, nutritious foods.
- ▶ A few mothers reported that care providers disrespected them and their children. Care providers failed to communicate pertinent information about their children's experience under their care. Others were concerned that their children's language and culture were not accepted or respected by their care providers.
- ▶ These mothers were challenged by the cost of care, which often exceeds what they make at work. Four of them stopped working to take care of their children.
- ▶ Most mothers relied on referrals from friends or coworkers to find care. Most of the mothers did not know that dialing 211 is a resource to find information about child care. This shows that many families in this community lack access to reliable information sources.
- ▶ Some mothers needed to choose between affordability of care and quality of care.
- ▶ Many mothers wanted more parent education trainings and resources in Spanish to help them be the best moms they can be.

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Responsive Evaluation & Research

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Opiniones de padres sobre el cuidado infantil

Doulas Latinas International

En enero de 2020, se llevó a cabo una jornada de conversación comunitaria con los padres en Hillsboro, Oregon, para conocer sus necesidades de cuidado infantil y sus experiencias al respecto en la comunidad. Esa jornada formó parte de una serie de jornadas con familias que se llevaron a cabo con fondos provenientes de la Subvención de Desarrollo Preescolar en el marco de una evaluación de las necesidades de aprendizaje temprano en todo el estado. El objetivo de las jornadas era escuchar las opiniones de familias que aún no estaban registradas para comprender las necesidades y las experiencias de aprendizaje temprano de las familias. La jornada fue codiseñada, planificada y organizada por Doulas Latinas International y por investigadores de AB Cultural Drivers, de la Universidad Estatal de Portland y del Centro de Aprendizaje Social de Oregon. A la jornada, asistieron 11 madres que actualmente viven en Hillsboro. Las madres habían llegado a Oregon desde México. La conversación comunitaria se llevó a cabo en español.

Experiencias actuales con el cuidado infantil y desarrollo de la preparación escolar

¿Quién cuida actualmente a sus hijos de 0 a 5 años y qué actividades realizan?

Además de cuidar a sus hijos ellas mismas, seis madres tienen a sus hijos en preescolar, tres tienen amigos y vecinos que ayudan y dos dependen de familiares. Las madres describieron varias actividades diferentes que los niños realizan con sus cuidadores, como dibujar, jugar, cantar, tocar instrumentos musicales, mirar televisión y jugar videojuegos, salir a caminar por el parque, ir de compras y pasar tiempo con otros niños. Muchos cuidadores hablan español con los niños, pero no celebran las tradiciones ni la cultura de sus familias. Por último, las madres hablaron sobre las actividades que realizan los cuidadores para que los niños puedan desarrollar habilidades sociales y otras habilidades de preparación escolar, como ayudar a los niños a aprender a compartir y tomar turnos con otros niños, a realizar actividades con otros niños, a respetar a los demás, a reconocer e interpretar sus emociones y a expresarse.

"Si dejo a mi hija con mi vecina, ella no está preparada para cuidar niños, no realiza actividades con mi hija."

"A veces, recurrimos a los vecinos o a una amiga porque no podemos pagar opciones de cuidado infantil de calidad, como un centro de cuidado infantil. Se nota la diferencia entre los niños que asisten a un centro de cuidado infantil y los que están bajo el cuidado de un familiar, una vecina o una amiga."

¿Dónde les gustaría que se preste el cuidado infantil?

Las madres querían que el cuidado infantil se prestara cerca de su hogar, con proveedores que hablen español. Querían un lugar con “salón para que sus hijos jueguen, un gran patio de juegos y estructura para ejercicio físico” y “diversas actividades.” Estaban preocupadas por la proporción de maestros por niño, y querían “5 a 8 niños [por maestro] según la edad.” Seis madres dijeron que les gustaría llevar a sus hijos al lugar donde se ofrece cuidado infantil, mientras que cinco madres dijeron que les gustaría que sus hijos vayan en transporte.

¿En qué horarios o días de la semana les gustaría que sus hijos estén bajo cuidado?

Como era de esperar, las distintas familias tenían necesidades diferentes:

Algunas madres querían contar con cuidado infantil de lunes a viernes, aunque deseaban horarios variados. Una madre quería de 9am a 12pm, otra quería contar con cuidado infantil de 8am a 5pm y otra quería de 6am a 4pm. Cuatro madres no trabajaban y estaban buscando algún tipo de opción de cuidado infantil. Las madres tenían dificultades para encontrar opciones de cuidado infantil fuera de los horarios de trabajo tradicionales. Por ejemplo, una madre indicó: **“No hay opciones de cuidado infantil por las noches. Por ejemplo, cuando nació mi otro bebé, busqué a alguien para que se quedara dos noches con mi otro hijo.” Tuvo dificultades para encontrar apoyo a corto plazo cuando lo necesitó.**

No todos los proveedores de cuidado infantil ofrecen oportunidades de aprendizaje a los niños de dichas familias. Una madre dijo: **“Si dejo a mi hija con mi vecina, ella no está preparada para cuidar niños, no realiza actividades con mi hija.”** Otra comentó: **“A veces, recurrimos a los vecinos o a una amiga porque no podemos pagar opciones de cuidado infantil de calidad, como un centro de cuidado infantil. Se nota la diferencia entre los niños que asisten a un centro de cuidado infantil y los que están bajo el cuidado de un familiar, una vecina o una amiga.”** Esto indica que algunas madres tenían que elegir entre la asequibilidad de las opciones de cuidado infantil y la calidad del cuidado infantil que recibían sus hijos.

Su situación ideal de cuidado infantil

¿Qué les gustaría que aprendan sus hijos?

Una madre dijo: **“Los proveedores deben contarles a los niños sobre nuestra cultura y procedencia, aprender a preparar las comidas de nuestro país, a bailar danzas folclóricas, a hablar mi dialecto. Head Start debería ser un programa bilingüe o que imparta educación en dos idiomas, con más personal bilingüe; debería enseñarles arte y deportes, como fútbol o algunos deportes físicos correspondientes a la edad de los niños. Debe contar con comidas nutritivas, y ofrecerles frutas y verduras a los niños.”**

¿Por qué es importante que sus hijos tengan actividades educativas, artísticas y de otro tipo que los ayuden a prepararse para el jardín de niños?

Una madre dijo que **“es muy importante que los niños en edad escolar aprendan en un grupo...socialicen, pasen tiempo juntos, aprendan a compartir con otros niños...los niños no van a la escuela con miedo porque saben que asisten para aprender.”**

Otra madre dijo que esas actividades pueden ayudar a **“identificar si los niños tienen necesidades especiales y cuáles son sus fortalezas y habilidades.”**

¿Qué tipo de ayuda les han brindado los cuidadores a ustedes y a sus hijos para estar más preparados para comenzar el jardín de niños?

La mayoría de las madres dijeron que los cuidadores han ayudado a que ellas y sus hijos estén preparados para el comienzo del jardín de niños. Una madre dijo que los cuidadores le sugieren **“llevar [a su hijo] a la escuela a la que tiene previsto que asista antes del inicio de las clases para realizar un recorrido por la escuela”** y habilidades académicas básicas de apoyo (p. ej., colores, números, escritura de su nombre) en el hogar. Otras madres dijeron que los cuidadores ayudaron a sus hijos con las responsabilidades básicas, como **“ir al baño solos antes de comenzar el jardín de niños,” “vestirse solos” y “levantar su plato, recoger sus juguetes y sacar la basura.”**



**¿Por qué es importante encontrar proveedores que hablen español?
¿Es difícil encontrar proveedores que hablen español?**

Muchas madres estuvieron de acuerdo en que es importante contar con proveedores que hablen español para que **“nuestros hijos hablen el idioma; a veces, los niños no quieren hablar más en español, solo en inglés.”**

Tres madres comentaron que es difícil encontrar proveedores que hablen español:

“...casi todos hablan inglés aquí. La comunidad hispana es pequeña, hay pocos hispanos, así que somos la minoría.”

“No se puede encontrar proveedores hispanos en Internet.”

“La diversidad cultural es tanta que no pueden hablar español, pero [los proveedores] hablan chino u otros idiomas que no son el español; se necesitan más proveedores que hablen español.”

Encontrar el cuidado infantil adecuado

Muchas madres dijeron que confían en las sugerencias de amigos que ya han pasado por el proceso de conseguir cuidado infantil para poder encontrar opciones para sus hijos. Una madre comentó que encontró información sobre el cuidado infantil por medio de **“compañeros de trabajo, Internet o un grupo de madres, y llamando al 211.”** Este último fue una novedad para la mayoría de las madres, que no sabían que podían llamar al 211 para obtener información sobre el cuidado infantil.

¿Qué información o ayuda les gustaría tener en el futuro para tomar una buena decisión sobre el cuidado infantil?

Además de las recomendaciones de otras familias, de amigos personales y de compañeros de trabajo, una madre comentó que la información sobre precios es muy importante, especialmente en lo que respecta a las escuelas bilingües, que son más costosas. Otra madre dijo que la información sobre disponibilidad es muy importante porque **“muchos lugares tienen una lista de espera.”** Las madres miran anuncios (en línea y folletos) para obtener esa información, y una dijo que **“debería haber un sitio web específico para obtener dicha información.”**

¿Han sentido alguna vez que las personas que cuidan a sus hijos fueron irrespetuosas con ustedes o con sus hijos?

Cuatro madres presentes en la jornada compartieron ejemplos de situaciones en las que los cuidadores fueron irrespetuosos con sus hijos. Las inquietudes de dos madres estuvieron relacionadas con la calidad de supervisión y la comunicación que recibían de los cuidadores:

“Un día, mi hijo estaba jugando en el patio de juegos de la escuela, llegó a casa, se veía diferente y se fue a dormir. Me pregunté: ¿habrá sucedido algo en la escuela? Llamé a la escuela y la maestra me dijo que mi hijo se había caído, pero que no había sido grave...lo llevé al hospital para que lo examinen; desde entonces, no confío en ella porque la cuidadora no me dijo la verdad.”

“[Un niño] le arrojó [a mi hijo] ramas a los ojos y a la cara...Cuando llamé a la maestra, simplemente dijo ‘solo estaban jugando juegos de niños.’”

Una madre compartió un ejemplo de una maestra de Head Start que había sido irrespetuosa con muchas familias:

“La misma persona me gritó...la señora tuvo problemas con varias familias, y había familias que eran voluntarias en la escuela y se podía notar el rechazo de la maestra.”

A una madre le preocupaba que no se respetaba el idioma de su hijo en el salón de clases y dijo: **“...no hablaba inglés en la escuela y no podía expresarse.”**

¿Han tenido alguna vez que dejar de trabajar para cuidar a sus hijos porque el cuidado infantil es demasiado costoso?

Cuatro madres dijeron que habían tenido que dejar de trabajar para cuidar a sus hijos debido al costo del cuidado infantil. Dos madres comentaron que lo que ganaban en su trabajo equivalía, básicamente, a lo que le pagaban a la niñera.

Sus necesidades como padres

¿Qué los ayudaría a desempeñar sus roles de padres de la mejor manera posible?

Muchas madres deseaban contar con más recursos que las ayuden a cuidar a sus hijos. Una solicitó libros sobre desarrollo infantil en español; tres solicitaron capacitaciones para padres sobre diversos temas (p. ej., desarrollo cognitivo, cocinar para niños quisquillosos para comer) en español para poder estar preparadas para cuidar a los niños; y dos madres querían, específicamente, saber más que sus propios padres sobre la crianza de niños para evitar "repetir los mismos patrones."

Una madre primeriza no tenía información sobre cómo cuidar a su recién nacido. Dijo: **"Le pregunté a mi vecina y amiga cómo cambiar pañales, cómo amamantar, las cosas básicas."**

Otras madres deseaban tener más paciencia con sus hijos, contar con ayuda con las tareas domésticas y entender mejor a sus hijos adolescentes.

Aportes clave

- ▶ Estas madres valoraron las actividades que ayudan a preparar a sus hijos para el jardín de niños, especialmente las actividades sociales que les permiten aprender a interactuar con otros niños y adquirir confianza en un entorno escolar; también valoraron mucho las actividades específicas desde el punto de vista cultural, pero ninguno de los proveedores de cuidado infantil realiza actividades para celebrar la cultura o las tradiciones de sus hijos.
- ▶ Estas madres tienen dificultades para encontrar proveedores de cuidado infantil que hablen español, y les preocupa que sus hijos no puedan expresarse mientras están bajo cuidado o que no deseen hablar más en español. Se desean programas bilingües o que impartan educación en dos idiomas.
- ▶ Estas madres hicieron hincapié en que los proveedores de cuidado infantil deben ofrecerles a sus hijos alimentos saludables y nutritivos.
- ▶ Algunas madres informaron que los proveedores de cuidado infantil fueron irrespetuosos con ellas y con sus hijos. Los proveedores de cuidado infantil no comunicaron información pertinente sobre la experiencia de los niños bajo su cuidado. Otras madres estaban preocupadas porque los proveedores de cuidado infantil no aceptaban ni respetaban el idioma y la cultura de sus hijos.
- ▶ Estas madres enfrentan el desafío del costo del cuidado infantil, que suele superar lo que ganan en el trabajo. Cuatro de ellas dejaron de trabajar para cuidar a sus hijos.
- ▶ La mayoría de las madres confiaban en las recomendaciones de amigos o compañeros de trabajo para encontrar opciones de cuidado infantil. La mayoría de las madres no sabían que contaban con el recurso de llamar al 211 para encontrar información sobre el cuidado infantil. Esto indica que muchas familias de esta comunidad carecen de acceso a fuentes de información confiables.
- ▶ Algunas madres tenían que elegir entre la asequibilidad de las opciones de cuidado infantil y la calidad del cuidado infantil.
- ▶ Muchas madres querían más capacitaciones sobre educación para padres y recursos en español que las ayuden a desempeñar sus roles de madres de la mejor manera posible.

Agradecimientos

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Hearing from Parents About Their Child Care Needs



Frontier Early Learning Hub

In January 2020, individual interviews were conducted with parents in Harney County, Oregon (Burns and Hines) to learn about their experiences with, and needs for, child care in their community. These interviews were part of a series of family listening sessions funded by the Preschool Development Grant as a part of a statewide early learning needs assessment. The goal of the listening sessions was to hear family voices that have not yet been reflected in ongoing work to better understand families' early learning needs and experiences. The interview sessions were co-designed, planned, and conducted by researchers at the OSLC Developments, Inc. and Portland State University, with support from the Frontier Early Learning Hub. Eight parents were interviewed by phone, all mothers of young children and all were English speaking.

Parent's Needs and Challenges in Finding Child Care

Most parents talked about how difficult it is to find quality care for their children in this geographically isolated rural area. Parents mentioned safety (of the provider and the environment), reliability, and affordability as their top priorities. Parents described significant concerns in finding trusted care providers where children would be safe, as well as challenges finding care that was available during their work schedules. Parents told us that finding a provider they could trust to ensure their child's safety was paramount. Parents also said they needed to find a provider with flexible hours, as the parents' own work schedules were sometimes outside the typical 9-5 working day. One parent also mentioned that they were interested in the importance of socialization and in programs that could help support early literacy skills—such as letters and writing their names. One parent said they chose the preschool because “it was the only option.”

“I think we need more people who actually are qualified to step up and do child care. ‘Cause there is a lack of child care in this county. I’ve lived in Sacramento, I’ve lived in Klamath Falls and this place...there’s not enough child care for poor people that are trying to go back to work. That’s the hardest part is trying to actually find people...”

What would you ideally want to know to make a good decision?

Parents described that the information they used to make decisions was mostly based on visiting child care providers themselves, or through word of mouth (their family and friends),



What does ideal child care look like?

These parents' descriptions of ideal child care were influenced substantially by their expressed need for trusted child care in reasonable proximity to their home. For example, almost one half of the parents said they would prefer child care to be in their own home. One parent said she would prefer to not work and take care of her own children rather than trust anyone else to care for them. One parent was a stay-at-home mom, but was looking for preschool near her house. Those that preferred schooling or care outside the home would prefer the facility to be located close to their home. Transportation was a concern, with a few saying they could drive their child to the care facility. One parent mentioned "Dial-a-Ride" for parents who do not own vehicles. A few parents said transportation would be helpful if it could be provided by the child care provider.

or resources provided by staff at the Department of Human Services (DHS). To make good decisions, parents described the importance of getting to meet or know the provider and visit the site. Background checks and references were also mentioned by most parents as important. If care was going to be provided out of a home, parents were also concerned about knowing who else was living in the home, who would be coming in and out, and in some cases, background checks for these people were a concern as well. Cleanliness of the home or facility, provider drug tests, length of provider experience, how the provider interacted with children, and how they would handle certain situations were also mentioned as important.

What was most important to your final decision?

Most parents said that what was most important to their final decision was being able to meet the providers and do a site visit, because this let them know whether they would feel comfortable with the site and staff and, most importantly, that their child would be safe. Trusting the care provider, seeing how they interacted with their child, and being flexible with hours/location were also mentioned. One parent said that no one passed the background check she ran, or the results came back inconclusive, so her husband quit his job to become a stay-at-home dad.

Compromising for Child Care

About one half the parents said they did not make compromises in what they were looking for, while other parents mentioned compromising work schedules and not having other care or school options to choose from. One parent's compromise was not seeing her children for days because the parent worked odd hours, and the child care provider would not watch the children at their home so the parent did not get to see her children between school, sleeping, and her work hours for sometimes days at a time. Another family's compromise was for the husband to quit his job to care for their children because they did not trust anyone; their son had been injured while with their previous provider who had then not alerted the mom until she came to pick up her child.

Important Early Learning Supports for School Readiness

All the parents reported that they would ideally want their child to be learning while in care. In particular, a number of parents described having a provider who interacts with children rather than sitting them in front of a TV. When it came to specifics about what they would like their children to learn, one parent mentioned a particular curriculum she had experience with—Timberdoodle—while the other parents mentioned social skills, sharing, being respectful, and general growth and connection with the provider. Parents also mentioned arts and crafts, coloring, and writing their name. A few parents also mentioned wanting their child to receive help with their school work and tutoring as they grow older.



Experiences of Bias

All families interviewed reported that they only spoke English in their homes. One family felt they had been disrespected because she was a recovering drug addict. In response to the question about whether they felt their provider created opportunities to highlight their family background and traditions, parents either said it was not something that was ever done or thought of, that they did not feel it was relevant to their family, or that their provider recognized their child's birthday, Christmas, or Thanksgiving holidays as examples of family culture.

Costs of Care: Impacts on Work

Significantly, all families but one reported that they have chosen not to work because child care was too expensive, either in the past or currently. The one mother who did not say yes to the question added that if she did not have such a good job, or once she has an additional child, she might be in the position of having to choose between work and paying for child care. Most parents said that once they added up how much they were making through their work, and compared this to how much child care would cost, it either was not worth it for them to work—or in many cases, that they actually would have owed money on top of what their paycheck would afford. One family had experienced going into debt in the past for this same reason. Other families mentioned that receiving help from DHS for a copay plan was the only way they could afford child care. Having multiple children that needed care was also a factor in choosing not to work and to provide the child care themselves instead.

Early Learning Supports for Kindergarten Readiness

Every parent reported that it was extremely important to them that their child care provider help their child be ready to start kindergarten and felt that at least some of their providers did this. For example, parents reported that most of their providers did social-skills activities, like having children work in groups, eat together, play outside, and go to the library. Parents also mentioned more general activities that they or their providers did, such as reading to the children, helping kids with the general routine of school, and getting kids used to separating from parents now so it will not be so difficult when they start school.

Only a few parents told us that their early learning provider gave them information about to help them support their child's learning at home. Providers more typically provided updates about what their child was doing in care and occasionally made suggestions about what children might need to work on to be ready for school, such as helping their child recognize the first letter of their name, practicing tracing and writing their name and handwriting skills, and counting skills.

What gets in the way of being able to be the best parent you can be?

The most frequent barrier that parents talked about when asked this question was time was that they felt that they simply do not have enough time for their children. Most of the parents we spoke with were single parents, parents with multiple children, and working parents, and they talked about these factors as making it difficult to spend time and pay attention to their child. Most parents responded that having more time with their child would help them feel they were doing the best they could as a parent, through more support at home, being able to adjust work schedules, and just generally being able to do more with their kids. One parent said that she would feel like she was doing a good job as a parent if she was, "doing all I can to provide what they need. Making sure I give each child individual one on one time."

Another parent said that how her child responds and behaves with her, when her child “lights up” is all the validation she needs.

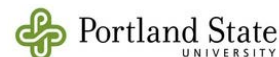
One parent reported that her family was involved with DHS/child welfare, and that the agency was what “got in the way.” This parent expanded on this point by saying that getting more flexibility and understanding from DHS, and feeling that they understood that “people need chances,” would help her to feel she was doing the best she could; consequently, she would not be constantly scared of losing her kids again.

One parent said that the biggest barrier for her was dealing with the child’s behavior, stating that she often needed to “leave the room and take a break and come back to it.” This suggests that these parents might see value in having additional parenting support, education, and encouragement to spend time with their children.

Key Takeaways

- ▶ Lack of available child care providers, generally, is a central concern for these parents.
- ▶ Aspects of care that are most important for these parents are cost/affordability, feeling that they can trust the provider, as well as geographic proximity.
- ▶ There is significant mistrust of the providers who are available and a need for better ways for parents to get information about where quality, affordable care might be located.
- ▶ These parents clearly see that quality early learning experiences can help children be ready for school; generally, however, they did not feel that either themselves or their children were getting the kinds of supports they needed in this area.
- ▶ Virtually all of these parents reported not working at some point because of the cost of child care.
- ▶ Parents expressed a strong desire to be able to spend more time actively engaged in parenting their children, but faced challenges related to work, single parenting, and other factors in doing so.

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Hearing from Providers About Their Program Needs

Head Start Coffee Creek

In January 2020, a small focus group was held with three long-term staff members of a Head Start (Community Action Washington County) that works with incarcerated mothers and their children, ages birth to age 5 years, at the Coffee Creek Correctional Facility in Wilsonville, Oregon. These interviews were part of a series of family listening sessions funded by the Preschool Development Grant as a part of a statewide early learning needs assessment. The goal of the listening sessions was to hear family voices that have not yet been reflected in ongoing work to better understand families' early learning needs and experiences. The interviews were planned and conducted by OSLC Developments, Inc. and Portland State University. Staff discussed their understanding of what families experience when looking for child care once paroled, as well as what they provide as early learning providers to incarcerated mothers and their children. They currently have six children enrolled in the Head Start program, with a capacity for eight. The children's mothers are involved in planning and providing some of the learning for their children, and work with staff to build their own understanding of child development and on individual parenting and personal goals.

Who Has Access to the Program While Incarcerated?

During intake at Coffee Creek Correctional, mothers with young children receive a flyer—printed in English and Spanish—with information about the Head Start program and requirements to get in. There are also presentations once a week about the programs that are offered, but word of mouth is the biggest source of getting the word out to mothers, mostly through moms who have been in the Head Start program. The program is only available to women being housed in the minimum-security facility, as opposed to the medium-security facility.

Barriers to Accessing the Head Start Program While Incarcerated

The resources available to women housed in the minimum facility are far greater than those housed in the medium facility, although even for those mothers barriers exist. For example,



Getting Information About Child Care Options

Providers strongly emphasized the importance to mothers of knowing about child care options and resources and also empowering the parents they are working with to get information and ask questions so they understand what quality care is and to look for a child care situation that is best for their child and family. Although the Head Start staff do some work to help families find services when they are paroled, as well as collaborating with outside agencies like Department of Human Services (DHS), the primary way parents look for child care is through the 211 database resource. DHS-involved families may also get information from their caseworker. The providers mentioned the “star system” (Spark), which provides ratings for child care programs, noting that it seems like this information is not getting to the families who would need and use it to find quality child care.

Thus, although getting good information about quality affordable options was seen as important, the level of support in facilitating access to this information for these mothers seems lacking, especially after they leave the facility. While moms are incarcerated, they have access to support through a resource center—as long as they are in the minimum facility (vs. the medium facility). The family resource center helps moms with camps for their kids, school supplies, child care, and other resources. The person in charge of this resource center works in collaboration with the Family Preservation Project.

if a mother has to be in the infirmary for health reasons, because it is located in the medium side, they do not get access to the Head Start program. Further, providers mentioned that even when the moms qualified, they have to be able to advocate for themselves and request in writing to participate.

There are also likely language barriers because the materials are printed only in English and Spanish, and the system to contact Head Start is through writing. Head Start does have access to Spanish interpretation, but language support is only available after a mother makes an initial contact with the program in writing in English.

Providers also agreed that they would be able to serve more families if they had transportation support for their Head Start program to bring the children to the site:

“I have many moms who are qualified, who have children within the age range...but grandma doesn’t have a driver’s license and grandpa works.”

What Do Parents Want Their Children to Learn?

Providers say they hear about the importance of pre-academic skills, as well as women’s concerns about social-emotional readiness. They attribute some of the mothers’ focus on social-emotional learning to their involvement with Head Start, where this is a primary focus.

“ABCs and the 123s...but, pushing curriculum aside, I think they want them to be ready for kindergarten...to feel competent and have confidence going in to kindergarten.”

However, they report that parents’ first concern is that their child is safe, has a sense of belonging, and is nurtured in that environment.

Early Learning Program Supports for Kindergarten Readiness

These providers described spending time weekly with each of the incarcerated mothers of the students in their classrooms to plan the curriculum for the 2-days-a-week Head Start classes. During this time, they discuss the importance of play and how activity-based learning supports their child’s development and school readiness skills. They felt that this model of collaborating with the parents engages their sense of self-efficacy and builds the parents’ understanding of their child’s development, strengths, and learning needs. Head Start staff are able to encourage parents to use their child’s interests to embed learning in preferred activities, to normalize that their children will not always be interested in what the parents planned for the day’s learning, and to encourage parents to be flexible and let it go rather than force planned learning activities.

“...we do believe that parents are their child’s primary teacher, and to really empower that role, of what they are doing by being present, and offering these opportunities and supporting their children is crucial and super meaningful, and that’s what’s exciting. These moms get so excited about planning and seeing how their child engages with it, and being able to report back and share with other moms...and it just builds this amazing community of moms that are spurring on the development of their children.”

Barriers to Accessing Quality Care After Parole

Once women leave the correctional facility, they face additional barriers to finding affordable quality child care. Providers mentioned that what they hear from parolees is that they mostly look for another Head Start because this is what they know, they know what it offers, and how comprehensive it is; waiting lists and availability of Head Start can be a challenge. Parents are also struggling with the cost of child care. “Probably the number one barrier for receiving quality child care is being able to afford it.”

Providers talked about the difficulty that paroled mothers have in finding employment—which is often a requirement of their parole—as well as being able to afford quality child care. Finding employment with their criminal background is difficult. The jobs they do get are often restaurant and service work, which often means working nights and weekends. This creates a barrier to finding quality child care due to the high cost of child care compared to their wages, as well as the clash of their employment schedule and child care schedules that rarely provide care in the evenings or on weekends. This leads to children sometimes remaining with the caregivers for a longer time until their paroled parent can find employment to afford child care.

Finding care that is in close proximity to where parents live and work, and access to transportation, is another important consideration and barrier. Having transportation support would mean not having to worry about how they will get their child to care. Transportation was mentioned as a particularly important aspect of reducing the puzzle pieces of daily life for paroled women.

Providers noted that there were often waiting lists for spots in Head Start or other free or low-cost preschool. Providers mentioned that if the children qualified for Head Start, they likely did not qualify for other options; because Head Start has classes only twice a week for 2 hours, this creates a lot of time where the child needs additional care—which can be difficult to afford and to schedule as well.

Finally, providers also mentioned some parents trying to find care that is culturally supportive and inclusive, and that this was difficult to find. They mentioned that while the women were incarcerated and participating in the on-site Head Start program, they did some activities to support children's cultural traditions, although these were limited to celebrating holidays and offering culturally specific foods.



Experiences of Bias

When asked whether they heard about times these women or children may have negative experiences related to cultural or other bias or racism, they said the most common thing she has heard from parents is that they feel too intimidated to be good advocates for their children due to what they perceive as their lower socioeconomic status, as well as due to their race/ethnicity. They noted that these mothers may not feel empowered to ask questions or not feel respected for their knowledge about what their children need. These providers also acknowledged that they have a very low population of Spanish/non-English speaking families.



Key Takeaways

- ▶ The on-site Head Start program offers valuable support to incarcerated mothers and their children, not in supporting children's early learning but supporting mothers to understand and prepare for life after parole.
- ▶ There is a need for better access to information and resources to find quality child care options for these women, post parole.
- ▶ The barriers faced by paroled mothers in terms of the nature of employment that is most often available to them (low-paying, service industry jobs that require nights and weekends) creates significant and often insurmountable barriers to accessing sufficient affordable, quality child care.
- ▶ To be successful post parole, these mothers would benefit from significant post-parole support for both their own personal well-being as well as for their children's development.

What Gets in the Way of Parenting?

Mental health and specifically access to support services, whether inside or outside the correctional facility, was mentioned as a significant barrier that many of the mothers they work with face in feeling confident and empowered as a parent. Other things that these mothers faced in feeling like they could "be the best parent they could be" while incarcerated were the lack of time with their children, the limitations of the physical spaces for visitation, and lack of transportation support for family to bring children to the facility to visit. A specific barrier mentioned for incarcerated mothers having quality visits was the visiting room environment, which was described as very loud, crowded, not child friendly (the space for visits is itself a small corner with very few toys), and that access to the playground is dependent on the whims of the officer in charge.

A barrier mentioned for paroled parents was the difficulty around trying to get "back on their feet" after prison. As mentioned above, the difficulties faced by the mandate to find employment, challenges in doing so, and difficulties finding employment that also could be aligned with affordable available child care. For these women, such factors can make the difference between success post incarceration and recidivism:

"It's almost like they should be given a state voucher (for child care)...as they parole. 'Cause that's a barrier to them getting on their feet, and we know that women are facing multiple stressors, and if we're talking about staying in sobriety and out of criminality...if we're really serious about recidivism, how can we get people back on their feet?"

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Family Listening Session

Hearing from Parents About Their Child Care Needs

Head Start Seaside

In January 2020, a listening session with parents was held in Seaside, Oregon to learn about their needs for, and experiences with, child care in their community. These interviews were part of a series of family listening sessions funded by the Preschool Development Grant as a part of a statewide early learning needs assessment. The goal of the listening sessions was to hear family voices that have not yet been reflected in ongoing work to better understand families' early learning needs and experiences. The interview sessions were co-designed, planned, and conducted by researchers at OSLC Developments, Inc. and Portland State University with Northwest Early Learning HUB and the Lower Columbia Hispanic Council. Four mothers and one grandmother attended the session, currently living in Seaside. The listening session was conducted in Spanish.

Current Child Care Experiences and Building School Readiness

What are the most important things you look for when seeking child care?

For all moms, safety was the most important factor in their search for childcare, including safety related to ensuring their children's health. Good communication, trust, and respect were also important elements in their search for childcare. These mothers also expressed their need for child care that can be offered during flexible and non-traditional work hours, because their work schedules are variable.

One mom described how her list of expectations has decreased as she has become aware of the reality of child care expense:

"The list of things that I look for is more realistic now that I know my options. Safety, communication, relationship and flexibility."

"Mi lista de cosas que tengo que tener en mente es más realístico según las opciones que tengo. La seguridad, la comunicación, la relación que formemos y la flexibilidad en los horarios."



Support for Cultural and Family Traditions and Values

One of the mothers described that she was pleased that her child care provider speaks Spanish so her daughter will start out speaking Spanish, and noted cultural knowledge as helpful in caring for their child (for example, that she is familiar with the types of home treatments they use for their daughter's skin condition). At the same time, however, most of these mothers agreed that providers generally do not support their language or culture, and that they would like to see more events and dances that correspond to the culturally relevant dates and celebrations so that children can grow up understanding and accepting these traditions.

Where do you get information about child care and preschool options?

Moms reported seeking information through DHS and by calling 211, but told us that when they contacted these places, the options turned out to be inaccessible to them due to waitlists, expense, and scheduling inadequacies. All of these mothers found their current child care situations through word of mouth and recommendations, which is their preferred method:

"More than anything else, we can get information among ourselves as a community and make a decision from there."

"Más que nada, entre nosotros como comunidad podemos conseguir la información y de allí tomas tu decisión."

"At first, I tried the resources they tell you to use, DHS and 211, and I asked all the questions they tell you to ask. But I realized after so many calls that I couldn't afford those child care centers. [The information] didn't prepare me for reality." This mom chose an in-home child care situation for her daughter, but after talking with the provider about her concerns around her daughter watching television, she found that the provider no longer wanted to care for her. **"So, I stopped asking those questions and when I took this job, I used this as a reference."**

"Al principio fui donde te dicen en la información, a DHS y el 211 e hice las preguntas como te dicen. Pero me di cuenta después de tantas llamadas que no podía pagar por esos centros de cuidado. [La información] no me preparó para la realidad." Esta madre escogió a una señora para cuidar a su bebé, pero después de hablar con la proveedora sobre sus preocupaciones en cuanto a la televisión, la señora ya no quería cuidarlo. **"Así que dejé de hacer esas preguntas y cuando tomé este trabajo, fue de referencia."**

Their Ideal Child Care Situation

The mothers laughingly admitted that they would prefer to be with their children themselves. One mother expressed that she liked and appreciated her child care provider, but she wishes that there was a bigger space appropriate for young children to play and that her daughter had the opportunity to play with other children in a school or park setting. Another mom preferred a child care center with well-trained staff. These mothers agreed that each family has different child care needs that vary depending on work, so a flexible schedule is ideal: "Sometimes I have to drop her off at 6am and sometimes I have to pick up at 9:30pm."

Challenges Finding Care

The affordability of care was clearly a challenge, with these mothers reporting they could only afford about \$1-\$2 per hour. Two women who share the same caregiver report that she charges \$1/hour for potty-trained children and \$1.50/hour for children in diapers. They have the flexibility to pay every 2 weeks or every month and, importantly, only have to pay for the days and times their children are in care.

These mothers shared how the reality of looking for child care compared to their ideals:

“These centers do exist, but there’s a long waitlist, and then when they finally call you, you realize that it’s \$780 or \$900 per month, from 8am to 5pm. It’s like, ok, I can’t do that. And what’s more, I’d have to take him somewhere else too because I have to work outside of those hours. And it’s monthly, not flexible, they’re going to charge you whether you go or not.”

“Y si hay centros de cuidado, pero hay una larga lista, y además cuando ya te llaman, te das cuenta que es \$780 o \$900 al mes, de 8 a 5. It’s like ok, no puedo. Más, aparte, tendría que llevarle a otro lugar porque fuera de esas horas tengo que trabajar. Y no se ajusta, es algo mensual, te van a cobrar si vas o no.”

“If they[referring to working mothers] go to work and have to pay most of what they earn, it doesn’t make sense to work. And the reality is that they have to help their partners.”

“Si van a trabajar y tienen que pagar la mayor parte de lo que ganan, no tiene chiste que trabajes. Y la realidad es que ellas tienen que ayudar a sus parejas.”

Two of these mothers told us that they had taken their children out of care because it cost more than they earned. Another mother took a year off of work, which was only possible with the support of other family members helping her with housing.

“We lived with them while I wasn’t working, so I didn’t have to pay rent. They helped me with other expenses so that my costs were reduced and I could make that decision.”

“Vivimos con ellos mientras no trabajaba así que no tenía que pagar la renta. Me ayudaron con los gastos, o sea mis gastos fueron reducidos y pude tomar esa decisión.”

Finding providers who speak both Spanish and English (their preferred situation) was another barrier; although, mothers of children too young for Head Start told us that providers within their financial means are primarily Spanish speakers. When working with providers who do not speak Spanish, these mothers described the strategies they relied on to communicate, including using hand signals, both parties making an effort to communicate, finding someone who speaks Spanish to help, and relying on children to interpret.

“The obstacle for all of us is that we don’t know English. Even if we want to say a lot, we say a few words and are stuck wishing we could say what we want to say, but we can’t.”

“El obstáculo que hay para todas nosotras es que no sabemos el inglés. Aunque a veces queremos hablar mucho, [decimos] unas cuantas palabras y nos quedamos con las ganas de decir lo que nosotras queremos, pero no podemos.”

Early Learning Supports for Kindergarten Readiness

Kindergarten readiness was seen as very important to these parents, and they shared a keen desire for more information and help in building these skills in their children. For example, they would like guidance—starting as early as possible—about how to answer children’s myriad questions; how to help them solve problems; how to help them be socially prepared to interact with other children, including older children in a school setting; and how to be ready to separate easily from their parents. They would also like to feel more prepared themselves for what will happen when their children start school. Parents agree that going to Head Start is a tremendous support for school readiness.

One mom shared that her daughter did not get into Head Start and has not had much opportunity to spend time with other kids so she gets anxious when there are a lot of kids around. This mother told us that she is looking for ways to give her the chance to socialize before her big kindergarten transition. This experience was mirrored by other mothers who felt the kindergarten transition would be difficult because their family did not qualify for Head Start.

“When the kids start [Head Start], they don’t know anything. Then pretty soon they learn how to be social, how to play with friends, how to talk with them, to communicate, about what is right and wrong. For me this is very helpful.”

“Los niños no saben nada cuando vienen aquí. Dentro de poco aprenden cómo ser sociales, jugar con los amiguitos, hablar con ellos, a comunicar, sobre lo que está bien y lo que no. Esto me ayuda mucho.”

Key Takeaways

- ▶ These mothers would like to see quality preschool and child care for all children, regardless of income levels, because they all need to learn and be socially prepared for school. They would like to see additional options for families who fall just above the income limits for Head Start.
- ▶ These mothers valued activities that help prepare their children for kindergarten, particularly social activities that help them learn to interact with other children and gain confidence in a school setting.
- ▶ These mothers held a high value for culturally specific activities, but none of their care providers do activities to celebrate their children's culture or traditions.
- ▶ Some mothers struggle to find care providers who speak Spanish, and they especially want to make sure that their children are learning both Spanish and English.
- ▶ These mothers were challenged by the cost of care, which often exceeds what they make at work. One half of them stopped working to take care of their children.
- ▶ Most mothers relied on referrals from friends or coworkers to find care. Information about center-based care that they found through 211 and the information provided by DHS were financially outside of the families' means, had long waiting lists, and did not fit their scheduling needs.
- ▶ Some mothers needed to choose between affordability of care and quality of care.

In their current child care settings, these mothers talked about some key supports that were helping their children. They described how their children get excited about reading the books that providers send home with their families and tracking their time spent reading together. These mothers described how important it is that books are sent home in Spanish. They also receive learning games like memory and dice games and were asked to track how much they play together and if they liked the game.

"All children need to learn so they know what to expect at school. Because they will all go to the same school, some more prepared than others. When will they catch up? If two years have passed and he was at home all that time?"

"Todos los niños tienen que aprender para que vayan despiertos a la escuela. Porque todos van a ir a la misma escuela, unos más preparados y otros llegan hasta abajo. ¿Cuándo los van a alcanzar? ¿Si ya pasaron dos años y él se la pasó en la casa?"

"And then they tell parents to have quality time with their kids but we have other responsibilities, to take care of the house and prepare meals. So I try to make time for learning. But those moments I share with her don't compare to this (Head Start). It's a different type of learning. I can't do this in my house."

"Y luego les dicen a los padres del tiempo de calidad, pero tenemos otras responsabilidades de arreglar la casa y preparar las comidas. Intento dedicar tiempo al aprendizaje, pero esos momentos que comparto con ella no se comparan con esto. Es otro tipo de aprendizaje. No puedo convertir mi casa en esto."

Acknowledgements

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Opiniones de padres sobre el cuidado infantil

Head Start Seaside

En enero del 2020, se realizó una sesión de escucha con padres de familia en Seaside, Oregon para aprender sobre sus necesidades y experiencias en cuanto al cuidado de niños en su comunidad. Las sesiones formaron parte de una serie de sesiones de escucha a las familias financiada por la Beca del Desarrollo Preescolar como parte de su evaluación de las necesidades de aprendizaje en el estado. El objetivo de las sesiones de escucha fue el de escuchar las voces de las familias que todavía no se vieron reflejadas en el trabajo continuo de entender mejor las necesidades y experiencias del aprendizaje temprana de las familias. Las sesiones fueron co-diseñadas, planificadas, y realizadas por investigadores de Centro de Aprendizaje Social de Oregon y la Portland State University con el HUB Noroeste de Aprendizaje Temprana y el Consejo Hispano de Lower Columbia. Asistieron a la sesión 4 madres y una abuela que viven actualmente en Seaside. La sesión de escucha se realizó en español.

Experiencias con el cuidado de niños y la preparación escolar

¿Cuáles son las cosas más importantes que buscan en un proveedor de cuidado de niños?

Para todas las mamás, la seguridad fue el factor más importante en su búsqueda de cuidado de niños, incluyendo la seguridad en su salud. Una madre describió la importancia de asegurar que no haya mold en la casa de la persona que cuida a su hija. La buena comunicación, la confianza, y el respeto también fueron elementos importantes. Y varias mamás dijeron que el horario tiene que ser flexible porque varían mucho sus horarios de trabajo. Una mamá describió cómo fue reduciendo su lista de expectativas al darse cuenta de la realidad del cuidado de niños en su comunidad.

“Mi lista de cosas que tengo que tener en mente es más realística según las opciones que tengo. La seguridad, la comunicación, la relación que formemos y la flexibilidad en los horarios.”



¿Los proveedores de cuidado de niños resaltan o celebran las tradiciones y cultura de su familia?

Las mamás dijeron que no, pero que sí les gustaría que hubiera eventos y bailes que correspondan con las fechas y celebraciones culturalmente relevantes para que los niños conozcan y acepten estas tradiciones.

¿Dónde consigues información sobre cuidado de niños y centros preescolares?

Las mamás dijeron que buscaban información a través de DHS y 211, pero se dieron cuenta que esas opciones no les fueron accesibles debido a las listas de espera, el costo, y los horarios que no responden a sus necesidades. También buscaban en internet. Todas las mamás encontraron sus situaciones actuales de cuidado de niños por referencia, su método preferido.

“Al principio fui donde te dicen en la información, a DHS y el 211 e hice las preguntas como te dicen. Pero me di cuenta después de tantas llamadas que no podía pagar por esos centros de cuidado. [La información] no me preparó para la realidad.” Esta madre escogió a una señora para cuidar a su bebé, pero después de hablar con la proveedora sobre sus preocupaciones en cuanto a la televisión, la señora ya no quería cuidarlo. **“Así que dejé de hacer esas preguntas y cuando tomé este trabajo, fue de referencias.”**

Todas estuvieron de acuerdo, **“Más que nada, entre nosotros como comunidad podemos conseguir la información y de allí tomas tu decisión.”**

Su situación ideal de cuidado de niños

Las madres dijeron entre risas que preferirían estar con sus hijos ellas mismas. Una mamá está contenta que su hija esté aprendiendo a hablar en español porque la señora que la cuida habla español y también le aplica los remedios caseros que están acostumbrados a usar en la casa para su condición de la piel. Pero quisiera que hubiera un espacio más grande preparado para niños pequeños y que su hija tuviera la oportunidad de jugar con otros niños en una escuelita o un parque. Otra mamá prefiere una guardería con personal capacitada.

Las mamás hablaron sobre la realidad de buscar cuidado de niños en comparación con sus ideales: **“Y sí hay centros de cuidado, pero hay una larga lista, y además cuando ya te llaman, te das cuenta que es \$780 o \$900 al mes, de 8am a 5am. It’s like ok, no puedo. Más, aparte, tendría que llevarle a otro lugar porque fuera de esas horas tengo que trabajar. Y no se ajusta, es algo mensual, te van a cobrar si vayas o no.”**

Una abuela comparte: **“Si van a trabajar [refiriéndose a las mamás que trabajan] y tienen que pagar la mayor parte de lo que ganan, no tiene chiste que trabajes. Y la realidad es que ellas tienen que ayudar a sus parejas.”**

¿Cuál sería el horario ideal y cómo llegarían sus niños?

Todas acordaron en que cada familia tiene necesidades distintas así que un horario flexible es ideal. **“A veces tengo que dejarla a las 6am y a veces tengo que recogerla a las 9:30pm.”** Todas prefieren dejar y recoger a sus hijos ellas mismas.

¿Qué sería un precio razonable para el cuidado de niños?

\$1-\$2 por hora se considera razonable. Dos mujeres que comparten la misma proveedora dicen que cobra \$1 por hora para los niños sin pañal y \$1.50 por hora para los niños en pañal. Tienen la flexibilidad de pagar por quincena o por mes y solamente tienen que pagar por los días y horas que ocupan, en vez de un gasto fijo mensual.

La preparación para el kindergarten

¿Qué tan importante es para usted que su proveedor de cuidado de niños le ayude a usted y a su niño a prepararse para el kindergarten?

La preparación escolar es muy importante para estas mamás. Quieren orientación, empezando lo antes posible, sobre cómo contestar las muchas preguntas que les dirigen los niños, cómo ayudarlos a resolver situaciones y a estar preparados socialmente para interactuar con otros niños, incluyendo los niños mayores, en el ambiente escolar, y poder despegarse de los papás fácilmente. También les gustaría estar más preparadas ellas mismas por lo que sucederá cuando sus niños entran en el kindergarten. Están de acuerdo en que el Head Start ayuda mucho para que los niños estén preparados para la escuela.

Una mamá compartió que por no haber calificado para Head Start, su hija no ha tenido mucha oportunidad de pasar tiempo con otros niños y por lo tanto se pone muy ansiosa cuando se encuentra entre muchos niños. Busca la manera de darle más oportunidades de socializarse antes de la gran transición al kindergarten. Otras mamás también dijeron que, si sus niños hubieran calificado para Head Start, el inicio escolar habría sido mucho mejor para ellos.

¿Qué hace su proveedor para ayudar a su niño o niña a desarrollar las habilidades sociales que necesita para el éxito escolar?

Los niños se emocionan mucho con los libros que envían a la casa. Les gusta leerlos y rastrear el tiempo que pasan leyendo juntos. Es importante para las familias que envíen libros en español. También reciben juegos de aprendizaje de Head Start, como memoria, y juegos con dardos, y rastrear el tiempo que juegan juntos y cómo les gustó el juego.

¿Cómo comunican con sus proveedores cuando no hablan español? ¿Es difícil encontrar proveedores que hablan español?

Las estrategias incluyen usar señales o escribir, que ambos hacen un esfuerzo para entenderse, buscarle a alguien que hable español para ayudar, o que un hijo mayor le ayude.

“El obstáculo que hay para todas nosotras es que no sabemos el inglés. Aunque a veces queremos hablar mucho, [decimos] unas cuantas palabras y nos quedamos con las ganas de decir lo que nosotras queremos, pero no podemos.”

“Y luego nos preguntan, ‘¿y sí me entiendes?’ Sí te entiendo, pero no sé cómo contestar.”

Algunas madres prefieren que su proveedor hable ambos español e inglés, y ha sido difícil encontrarlo, y otras, sobre todo las que tienen niños menores de tres años, dicen que todos los proveedores a su alcance hablan español.

¿Alguna vez ha tenido que dejar de trabajar debido al alto costo de cuidado de niños?

Dos mamás dijeron que sí, que en el momento de pagar a su proveedor se dieron cuenta de que habían pagado más de lo que ganaron. Otra mamá descansó un año del trabajo, lo cual fue posible debido al apoyo de otros familiares. “Vivimos con ellos mientras no trabajaba así que no tenía que pagar la renta. Me ayudaron con los gastos, o sea mis gastos fueron reducidos y pude tomar esa decisión.”

¿Qué más quieren contar sobre sus experiencias con el cuidado de niños y los centros de aprendizaje temprano? “

“Todos los niños tienen que aprender para que vayan despiertos a la escuela. Porque todos van a ir a la misma escuela, unos más preparados y otros llegan hasta abajo. ¿Cuándo los van a alcanzar? ¿Si ya pasaron dos años y él se la pasó en la casa?”

“Y luego les dicen a los padres del tiempo de calidad, pero tenemos otras responsabilidades de arreglar la casa y preparar las comidas. Intento dedicar tiempo al aprendizaje, pero esos momentos que comparto con ella no se comparan con esto. Es otro tipo de aprendizaje. No puedo convertir mi casa en esto.”



Aportes claves

- ▶ Desde la perspectiva de las mamás, todos los niños deberían calificar para recibir cuidado de niños y aprendizaje temprana, sin importar el nivel de ingresos de sus papás porque todos tienen que aprender y estar socialmente preparados para ir a la escuela y que debe haber opciones adicionales para familias que ganan un poco más del límite para recibir los servicios de Head Start.
- ▶ Las mamás ponen mucho valor en las actividades que ayudan a sus niños a prepararse para el kindergarten, sobre todo las actividades sociales que los ayudan a interactuar con otros niños y tener confianza en el ambiente escolar; también valoran actividades culturales, pero dicen que sus proveedores no ofrecen actividades que celebran la cultura ni las tradiciones de sus familias.
- ▶ Para algunas madres, ha sido difícil encontrar proveedores que hablen español, y se preocupan de que sus niños aprendan ambos el español y el inglés.
- ▶ El costo del cuidado de niños es un obstáculo para estas familias, frecuentemente excediendo lo que ganan en el trabajo. La mitad de ellas han dejado de trabajar en algún momento para cuidar a sus niños.
- ▶ La mayoría de las madres dependen de referencias para encontrar cuidado de niños. Los centros que encontraron a través de DHS y 211 no fueron a su alcance económicamente y debido a la inflexibilidad de los horarios.
- ▶ Algunas mamás tuvieron que escoger entre la calidad del proveedor y lo que les alcanzaba pagar.

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Hearing from Parents About Their Child Care Needs



Humanitarian Assistance with Kindness and Interculturalism

In January 2020, a listening session with parents and caregivers was held at the Humanitarian Assistance with Kindness and Interculturalism (HAKI) community center in Lake Oswego, Oregon. This listening session was part of a series of family listening sessions funded by the Preschool Development Grant as a part of a statewide early learning needs assessment. The listening session was co-designed, organized, and hosted by HAKI and AB Cultural Drivers, OSLC Developments, Inc., and Portland State University. The goal of the listening sessions was to include the perspectives of African immigrant and refugee families, to understand their early learning needs and experiences, and to ultimately inform the development of the state's early learning plan. This listening session was held in Swahili with 13 parents and caregivers—10 mothers of young children, 2 fathers, and 1 grandmother. In addition, some of the parents participating also had experience in the early learning field as a teacher, home visitor, or parent educator.

Current Child Care Experiences and Building School Readiness

Who currently takes care of your children ages 0-5 years and what activities do they do?

Getting support from their own parents and/or other family members was common across these parents. Five parents had young children in Head Start or Early Head Start, and two of those parents had a teacher or home visitor who speaks Swahili and is from their community. When asked the types of activities that these individuals provide for their young children, parents talked about a variety of things that include screen time, pretend play, outside time, meals, bedtime, arts and crafts, reading, setting a routine, social emotional skills, counting, learning their colors, shapes, letters, and interacting with peers.

When asked what providers do to celebrate or practice their child's traditions, culture, and language, parents shared that their parents, family members, or community members speak Somali or Swahili to their children and tell stories and sing songs in Swahili to the children so they don't lose their home language. They practice Muslim traditions such as washing after children get home from school, reading the Quran, and teaching children how to pray and how to have good manners, behave and be a good positive person.

"[The] babysitter speaks Somali and Swahili; she talks to the little ones in Swahili. She tells stories about Africa in Swahili."

What kinds of parenting supports are most important?

Parents had many ideas about what support would be beneficial for them. Parents shared that they often feel isolated and may feel more comfortable learning in a culturally-specific and peer environment.

“Being a parent is not an easy job, it is overwhelming and exhausting. Having a support group that can give you an idea about how to talk to your child.”

In addition, having someone from their community who can teach parents about different developmental stages, setting routines for young children, and different activities they can do with their young children. Parents also talked about the benefits of having a teacher or parent educator come to their community and talk to parents about how they can prepare children for school, what the expectations are for children and for parents, and how to communicate with teachers.

“As a parent if you’re not educated then you don’t realize those small things add up. You have to be educated and realize that you learn at such a young age and that’s what impacts them as an adult. The little things you do at home, the little activities recognizing them and connecting them. He’s learning something or his development now is so different three months later.”

Benefits of Early Learning Programs

Parents with children in Head Start or Early Head Start talked about the benefits for their families, including seeing their child use words to describe emotions and getting a referral to a speech therapist. One parent noted that her child who was in both programs seemed to gain more skills than her child who only attended Head Start. Another parent spoke about the value of having a home visitor.

“A lot of people are not comfortable with someone coming into the home. They help us with early delays that the home visitor can refer to a specialist. [Home Visitors] help with activities and [we] had a positive experience. All the development stages about the hearing, speech, social-emotional, cognitive, physical. If I talk to my youngest, before I didn’t talk to my kid now I talk to him even if he doesn’t have words, he mimics.”

One parent, who is also an early learning provider, described that in their community most parents think that younger children are not learning when they go to preschool because of the emphasis on play. However, she shared the benefits of play and other learning that happens in preschool.

“There might be a lot of toys in a preschool classroom but what they’re learning most importantly is social-emotional skills...But also we’re teaching them to count, colors, shapes, letters, we prepare them to be ready for kindergarten. Parallel talk, interacting with peers, trust me they’re learning a lot. We use visuals, emotions, we give them words that they can’t process yet.”

What early learning supports would you like to prepare your child for kindergarten?

Many parents said that they would like a culturally specific classroom or early learning program in their own community, and talked about not having opportunities for children to socialize, like story time, where their culture, language, and values would be understood, honored, and reinforced. A couple parents suggested that HAKI could provide this type of support. One parent talked about the importance of dual-language programs so that children can build skills for transitioning from one language to another. Another parent said that they would like to see more understanding and adaptation of what is taught in early learning based on their religion since sometimes schools teach children things that go against their religion. All parents said that they would like a home visitor or provider who speaks their language and is familiar with their culture and works from a place of understanding why families would be reluctant to engage in White dominant early learning support. A few parents mentioned that lack of trust of providers and teachers outside of their community as a barrier to engagement in early learning opportunities.

“A lot of parents are scared if there’s an American home visitor. Especially since they are scared of them calling DHS. A lot of people don’t want that and they lose a lot. It’s hard to trust somebody who’s outside of the community to come to your house or when you open your doors for people. The whole family or the kids may be taken away. Even if a child falls or gets hurt, they might blame the parents. The trust is an issue. This community has EHS but they do not participate because they do not trust those from outside the community.”

For the parents who were interested in support outside of the home, there were a variety of preferences, although the dates and times that were most needed included weekends and afternoons after 1pm, since most parents work swing and overnight shifts. Three parents said ideally early learning support would happen two days a week, another parent said once a week or twice a month when they are 3-5 years old. Another parent said morning classes are more beneficial since they will be expected to transition into a morning routine when they start kindergarten. One parent noted that **"We mostly keep our young kids at home since we don't trust. We would just rather have family members watch the little ones."**

Difference Between Home Culture and School Culture

Parents made it clear that their children are brought up in a different home culture and tradition than the White dominant culture at their school. Parents described the challenges for children and for themselves when crossing these cultural divides. One parent said:

"It is like day and night. That's why they're always having problems with their teachers. The teacher is expecting them to act differently." In families' countries of origin, children are expected and taught to respect their teachers differently. Children are taught to respect teachers just as much as they are taught to respect their parents."

"...the kids are scared of the teachers back home. The teachers here don't have the same discipline. Here the parents are responsible for that discipline."

"At school [the child] can tell the teacher like I'm not ready, I need quiet area because I'm not ready to listen to you. In our culture, at our home you have to listen to the old person."

"Our culture is kind of harsh so we have to understand our kids because the teacher over there using their words and talking. So we need as a parent [to understand that] we can also talk because our culture that does not teach that...So to learn how to talk to them and listen to them and discipline you can do it just using your words...So we need to educate our parents so we can be with the teachers and the teachers are on the same page."

A few parents expressed the fear that parents in this community have of teachers calling DHS, due to past experiences that reflect cultural misunderstandings. One parent said that at school children are taught that if they are experiencing abuse that they should call 911 or tell their teacher. Children are **"saying, 'Okay, if you say that to me the teacher said I can call 911 on you.' So for us, when we're talking to our kids sometimes we're like 'Hey, stop it!' So saying that they take it as abuse, so they're like okay, we can call 911 on you."**

This issue is further complicated by the fact that parents are fearful that teachers will take this information, call DHS, and the family will have a negative experience with the child welfare system. Parents felt that teachers need to communicate with families about their concerns prior to calling DHS.



Need for Teacher Diversity Training

One potential solution that families offered, which could help teachers understand differences between the home-school cultural divide for students is to provide diversity training for teachers. Teachers are expecting children from this community to act differently than the way they are expected to act at home.

"I think we should educate the teachers about our culture... They should have a day off to get trained on different cultures, Swahili culture, Somali culture, African culture. What we do at home and what we do at school and the teacher they should come and if they have any questions they should be trained to call the parents first before they call DHS."

Experiences of Discrimination and Stereotyping from Teachers and Schools

The experience of discrimination was widely shared among these families. One parent said, *"This is the biggest challenge, discrimination. It starts from early preschool and it can go all the way."* Parents have witnessed teachers treating their children differently academically compared to other children in the classroom; children have experienced school leaders saying negative things about them; and parents have experienced overt racism from other parents.

"There was a principal, he wasn't even a teacher, a principal who told my child that he's dumb. 'You're African, you Africans are dumb.' I was like, she said that, are you serious? I went to the principal and I talked to her and she said 'Oh I didn't mean it that way'. No, it doesn't matter which way you mean it, you told the child and the child feels that 'Oh the principal said that.' That's not right. You shouldn't say that, especially not the principal because they believe the principal knows more than the teachers. It was crazy. I didn't like it. My son who was like four years old, I took him out of school."

"So that's the most challenging, discrimination with teachers, with parents. I remember this instance when I was serving lunch there were 10 kids at my table. These parents walk in and come to a specific child sitting there and ask 'Is this child from Somalia, both mom and dad?' And I'm like yeah. 'Then how did he get this hair?' I was like, really? First of all there's a lot of Somalis that have different textured hair."

One parent's child received a pair of shoes from their Head Start teacher and thought that the teacher was operating on unspoken assumptions and had a stereotype of her and her son as lacking resources. The added fact that this was done without talking to the parent first is in line with another challenge we heard from many parents—teachers are not getting to know families, nor making an effort to strengthen parent-teacher communication.

"To not have that respect of a parent and teacher relationship to say 'hey can I give your son these shoes?' And giving me the opportunity to be like, no he can't have those shoes or I don't want them. You know what I mean? To assume that he needs it because he's African or in a Head Start program, automatically jumping to conclusion."

Poor Teacher-Parent Communication Is Harming Families

Multiple parents shared experiences of extremely challenging communication issues with their child's White teachers, and noted that they often do not get the same levels of information as other (non-African) parents. Two parents experienced instances where their child was injured and they felt the teacher did respond appropriately or adequately.

"I took [my child] to the hospital, they told me it was broken. I assumed he didn't tell anybody because I didn't get a call, I didn't get an email, I didn't get anything. He was like, 'Yeah, I told the teacher that my arm was hurting and she told me to go and sit down at my desk.'...What really made me furious and angry was, my child has a good friend who goes to school together...they are Caucasian and I kind of talked to her [the mom] about it. And she was like, 'She [the teacher] emails me every time my little girl gets a paper cut.'...That was kind of like, okay, now I felt that discrimination."

Another parent noticed that a Head Start teacher was relying completely on written communication to parents, even though most of the parents in the classroom could not read English. However, because of cultural norms and expectations of families in the US, immigrant and refugee parents might not raise the issue immediately to staff in white dominant organizations or institutions, especially if they haven't made attempts to build a relationship with the families and understand their perspectives.

"I was just an assistant, most teachers that come from our culture they don't like complaining a lot. We have a lot of patience, we take a lot. Maybe when we are about to explode that's just when we complain. A lot of things we observe and just stay quiet about it. That's what I notice."

One parent described the harm being done by teachers with negative perceptions of families:

"Teachers have more time with our children than we do, but still the teachers try to blame the parents, instead of parents blaming the teachers...But we still want to work together with the teachers so we expect the teachers to work with us to include the kids. So there's that stereotyping that is going on in our schools that if it can be handled from the top it would be much better."

Parents Want More Teachers Who Reflect and Understand Their Community

In addition to more teacher/provider training and education that builds specific cross-cultural understanding, other ways to bridge these divides are clearly needed, such as having more culturally specific providers. One parent has a preschooler who is in a classroom with a teacher from their community and an older child who is in a classroom with a White American teacher, and noted the extreme differences for their children:

“Like right now, my [youngest child] and has someone from our community as the teacher. If he does something bad that teacher is going to come and tell me hey, this is what’s going on. He cannot misbehave in school because he knows at the end of the day we will talk. She will care because she knows him personally...She’s not going to say your child is bad, she’s going to say how can we work together to settle this...We work together, we understand where we come from...how can the teacher and parent communicate with each other, work with each other to help our children? Not blame them...But my [older child] does something bad, I get a nasty email your son did this and this and this. She’s not going to sit there and be like hey, I’m going to talk to you, this is not right.”

Ideally, children would have more teachers that reflect their community, culture, and language—however, there are challenges.

“If there’s a school around our area we need to have our own teachers. I understand there’s the issue of pay that’s why they are going for better jobs.”

Key Takeaways

- ▶ Parents would like to see parent support groups, parent education, child socialization opportunities, and home visiting services that are provided by their community organizations and individuals from their community, with knowledge of their culture and language.
- ▶ Having a teacher from their community in the classroom with their children provides a more supportive environment for the child and better parent-teacher communication, however, teacher pay needs to be better in order to attract individuals from their community into the teaching profession.
- ▶ The issue of teacher and school discrimination and stereotyping needs to be addressed from the top.
- ▶ Teachers and school staff need to be trained in the cultural norms of the children in their classroom. Teachers need meaningful training in antiracism, especially when it comes to understanding and communicating with parents from backgrounds different from their own.
- ▶ Communication and relationship building with parents that is culturally-specific and builds trust is a key factor in engaging and supporting these families. Building this trust is likely to have to start with persons from within their community.
- ▶ Parents want their children to grow up seeing and experiencing their culture and language valued and reinforced in early learning and education settings.

Acknowledgements

AB  CULTURAL DRIVERS
Responsive Evaluation & Research

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Vipindi vya Kusikiliza vya Familia

Ruzuku ya Maendeleo ya watoto ambao hawajafika umri wa kuanza shule

Humanitarian Assistance with Kindness & Interculturalism Msaada wa kibinadamu wenye kuzingatia utu na ujamaa

Mwezi Januari, 2020, kipindi cha usikilizaji kilichowahusisha wazazi na walezi kiliandaliwa katika kituo cha Msaada wa kibinadamu (Humanitarian Assistance with Kindness & Interculturalism—HAKI) katika Ziwa Oswego, Oregon. Kipindi hiki cha kusikiliza kilikuwa ni sehemu ya mfululizo wa vipindi vya usikilizaji vya familia vilivyofadhiliwa na Ruzuku ya Maendeleo ya Utotoni kama sehemu ya tathmini ya mahitaji ya elimu ya utotoni. Kipindi cha kusikiliza kilibuniwa, kupangwa na kuandaliwa na HAKI pamoja na wawezeshaji wa Kitamaduni wa AB kwa kushirikiana na Chuo Kikuu cha Jimbo la Portland na OSLC Developments, Inc. Madhumuni ya vipindi vya usikilizaji lilikuwa kujumuisha mitazamo ya familia za wahamiaji na wakimbizi wa Kiafrika, kuelewa mahitaji yao ya elimu ya awali na uzoefu wao, na hatimaye kuhabarisha mpango wa maendeleo wa elimu ya utotoni ya jimbo. Kipindi hiki cha usikilizaji kilifanywa kwa lugha ya Kiswahili kikiwahusisha wazazi na walezi 13—kina mama 10 wa watoto wadogo, kina baba wawili, na bibi mmoja. Isitoshe, baadhi ya wazazi walioshiriki pia walikuwa na uzoefu katika suala zima la elimu ya utotoni kama mwalimu, mgeni wa kuzuru nyumbani, au mwalimu wa mzazi.

Kwa sasa ni nani anayewaangalia watoto wako wa umri wa miaka kati ya 0-5 na ni shughuli gani wanazofanya?

Kupata usaidizi kutoka kwa wazazi wao na/au wanafamilia wengine ilikuwa ni jambo la kawaida kwa wazazi hawa wote. Wazazi watano walikuwa na watoto wadogo katika daraja la awali au mwanzo wa daraja la awali, na wawili kati ya wazazi hao walikuwa na mwalimu au mgeni anayezuru nyumbani anayezungumza Kiswahili na anayetoka katika jamii yao. Walipoulizwa aina ya shughuli ambazo watu hawa huwapa watoto wao wadogo, wazazi waliongelea mamba mbalimbali ikijumuisha muda wa kuangalia runinga, michezo ya kuigiza, wakati wa kutoka nje, wakati wa kula, kulala, kufanya sanaa na ufundi, kusoma, kuweka ratiba, kujenga stadi za kihisia na kimahusiano, kuhesabu, kujifunza rangi, maumbo, herufi na kujumuika na marafiki.

Walipoulizwa mambo wanayofanya watoa huduma ili kusherehekea au kufanya mila, tamaduni, na lugha ya watoto wao, wazazi walisema kuwa wao, wanafamilia au wanajamii huwaongelea watoto wao Kisomali au Kiswahili, na huwasimulia hadithi na kuwaambia nyimbo watotot kwa lugha ya Kiswahili ili wasipoteze lugha yao ya nyumbani. Wao hufanya mila za Kiislamu kama vile kuwaosha watoto baada ya kufika nyumbani wakitoka shuleni, kusoma Korani, na kuwafundisha watoto kusali.

“Mlezi huyu huzungumza Kisomali na Kiswahili; yeye huwaongelea watoto wadogo Kiswahili. Yeye husimulia hadithi kuhusu Afrika kwa Kiswahili.”

Manufaa ya Mipango ya Elimu ya Utotoni

Wazazi walio na watoto walio katika Daraja la Awali au Mwanzo wa Daraja la Awali walizungumza kuhusu faida kwa familia zao, ikijumuisha kushuhudia watoto wao wakitumia maneno kuelezea hisia na kupewa rufaa ya mtaalamu wa usemi. Mzazi mmoja alisema kuwa mtoto wake ambaye alikuwa katika mipango yote miwili alionekana kupata maarifa zaidi kuliko mtoto wake ambaye alihudhuria mpango wa Daraja la Awali pekee. Mzazi mwingine alizungumza kuhusu thamani ya kuwa na mtaalam anayetembelea kaya.

“Watu wengi hujisikia kutokuwa huru au hutatizika kuwakaribisha wageni nyumbani. Wao hutusaidia na masuala ya kukawia mapema ambayo mtaalam anayetembelea kaya/ nyumbani anaweza kutoa rufaa kwa mtaalam. [Watembeleaji waNyumbani] husaidia shughuli na [sisi] tulipata huduma bora. Awamu zote za ukuaji kuhusu uwezo wa kusikia, kuzungumza, hisia na mahusiano, utambuzi, kimwili. Kama nikizungumza na mtoto wangu mdogo, awali sikuzungumza na mtoto wangu, sasa ninazungumza naye, na hata kama hana maneno, anaiga.”

Mzazi mmoja, ambaye pia ni mtoa huduma elimu ya utotoni, alieleza kuwa katika jamii yake, wazazi wengi hufikiria kuwa watoto wadogo hawajifunzi chochote wanapokwenda shule ya utotoni kwa sababu ya msisitizo wa michezo kwenye shule hizi. Hata hivyo, alitaja manufaa ya michezo na hatua nyinginezo za kujifunza zinazofanywa katika shule za awali.

“Kunaweza kuwa na vifaa vingi vya kuchezea katika darasa la shule ya awalilakini muhimu zaidi wanachojifunza ni stadi za kihisia...Lakini pia tunawafundisha kuhesabu, kutambua rangi, maumbo, herufi, tunawaandalia kwa ajili ya ya chekechea. Mazungumzo sambamba, kukutana na na marafiki; amini usiamini, wanajifunza mambo mengi sana. Tunatumia vifaa vya kutazama, hisia; tunawapa maneno ambayo bado hawawezi kuchakata.”

Ni usaidizi gani wa elimu ya utotoni ambayo ungependa kumpa mtoto wako ili kumwandaa kwa ajili ya chekechea?

Wazazi wengi walisema kwamba wangependa pawe na darasa lenye misingi ya kitamaduni au mpango wa elimu ya utotoni katika jamii yao, na walitaja kutokuwepo kwa nafasi za watoto kuhusiana, kama vile wakati wa kusimulia hadithi, ambapo utamaduni, lugha, na maadili yao yataeleweka, kuzingatiwa na kutekelezwa. Wazazi kadhaa walipendekeza kuwa HAKI ingetoa aina hii ya usaidizi. Mzazi mmoja alizungumzia umuhimu wa mipango ya lugha mbili ili watoto waweze kujenga ujuzi wa kubadilisha matumizi ya lugha moja hadi nyingine. Mzazi mwingine alisema kwamba angependa kuona uelewa zaidi na marekebisho ya maudhui yanayofundishwa katika elimu ya utotoni kulingana na dini yake kwani wakati mwingine shule hufundisha watoto mambo ambayo huenda kinyume na dini yao. Wazazi wote walisema kwamba wangependa mtaalam anayezuru nyumbani au mtoa huduma anayezungumza lugha yao na anayefahamu utamaduni wao, na anayefanya kazi huku akielewa kwa nini familia zinaweza kusita kushiriki katika usaidizi wa elimu ya utotoni inayotawaliwa na wazungu. Wazazi wachache walitaja kwamba kukosa kuwaamini watoa huduma na waalimu wa nje ya jamii yao kulikuwa kizuizi cha ushiriki katika fursa za elimu ya utotoni.

“Wazazi wengi huogopa kukiwa na mtaalam anayezuru nyumbani Mmarekani. Hii ni kwa sababu wanahofia kuwa watawasiliana na DHS. Watu wengi hawataki hivyo, na hivyo hupoteza nafasi nyingi. Ni vigumu kumwamini mtu wa nje ya jamii yako kuja nyumbani kwako au kumwalika nyumbani mwako. Familia au watoto wote wanaweza kuchukuliwa. Hata kama mtoto akianguka au kuumia, wataalam hawa wanaweza kuwalaumu wazazi. Uaminifu ni suala kubwa. Jamii hii ina EHS lakini hawashiriki kwa sababu hawawaamini watu wa kutoka nje ya jamii yao.”

Kwa wazazi ambao walitaka kupokea usaidizi wa nje ya nyumbani kwao, kulikuwa na mapendekezo mbalimbali, ingawa tarehe na saa ambazo walihitaji zaidi zilijumuisha siku za mwisho wa wiki na alasiri baada ya saa saba mchana, kwa kuwa wazazi wengi hufanya kazi zamu ya adhuhuri na usiku. Wazazi watatu walisema kuwa usaidizi wa elimu ya utotoni ungefanyika siku mbili kwa wiki, mzazi mwingine akasema mara moja kwa wiki au mara mbili kwa mwezi kwa watoto wa umri wa miaka 3-5. Mzazi mwingine alisema madarasa ya asubuhi yanafaidazaidi kwani watatarajiwa kuanza ratiba ya asubuhi wakati wakiingia shule ya chekechea. Mzazi mmoja alisema “Tunapenda watoto wetu wasalie nyumbani kwa kuwa hatuwaamini wahusika. Tungependa tu wanafamilia wawalee watoto wetu wadogo.”

Ni Usaidizi Gani wa Malezi Ambao ni Muhimu Zaidi?

Wazazi walikuwa na maoni mengi kuhusu usaidizi ambao ungewafaa. Wazazi walisema kwamba mara nyingi wanahisi kutengwa na wangejisikia huru zaidi kujifunza wakiwa katika mazingira yanayozingatia tamaduni na rika lao.

"It is like day and night. That's why they're always having problems with their teachers. The teacher is expecting them to act differently." In families' countries of origin, children are expected and taught to respect their teachers differently. Children are taught to respect teachers just as much as they are taught to respect their parents."

Isitoshe, kuwa na mtu wa jamii yao anayeweza kuwafundisha wazazi kuhusu awamu mbalimbali za ukuaji, kuwawekeka ratiba watoto wadogo, na shughuli tofauti wanazoweza kufanya na watoto wao. Wazazi pia walizungumza kuhusu faida za kuwa na mwalimu au mkufunzi wa wazazi anayezuru jamii yao na kuzungumza na wazazi kuhusu jinsi wanavyoweza kuwanda watoto wahudhuri shule, matarajio kwa watoto na kwa wazazi, na jinsi ya kuwasiliana na walimu.

"Kama mzazi, ikiwa hujaelimika huwezi kuyatambuamambo hayo madogo muhimu. Sharti upate elimu na utambue kuwa unajifunza katika umri huo mdogo na hili ndilo jambo linalowaathiri kama watu wazima. Mambo madogo unavyofanya nyumbani, shughuli ndogo zinawatambua na kuwaunganisha. Anajifunza kitu au ukuaji wake sasa ni tofauti sana namiezi mitatu baadaye."

Tofauti kati ya Utamaduni wa Nyumbani na Utamaduni wa Shuleni

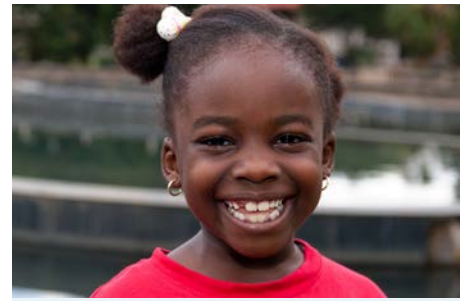
Wazazi walisema wazi kuwa watoto wao wamelelewa katika tamaduni na mila tofauti nyumbani kwao kando na utamaduni wa uzungu shuleni mwao. Wazazi walieleza kuhusu changamoto zao na za watoto wao wanapokabiliana na tofauti hizi za kitamaduni. Mzazi mmoja alisema, *"Tofauti hizi ni kama usiku na mchana. Ndiyo sababu daima huwa na shida na walimu wao. Mwalimu anawatarajia wawe na tabia tofauti."* Katika nchi za asili za familia, watoto wanatarajiwa na hufundishwa kuwaheshimu walimu wao kwa njia tofauti. Watoto hufundishwa kuheshimu walimu sawasawa na walivyofundishwa kuwaheshimu wazazi wao.

"...watoto huwaogopa walimu wakiwa nyumbani. Walimu hapa hawana nidhamu sawa. Hapa wazazi wanawajibika kwa nidhamu hiyo."

"Shuleni [mtoto] anaweza kumwambia mwalimu, Siko tayari, ninahitaji mahali patulivu kwa sababu siko tayari kukusikiliza. Katika utamaduni wetu, nyumbani kwetu, watoto sharti wawasikilize watu wakubwa."

"Tamaduni yetu ina ukali fulani, kwa hivyo inabidi tuwaelewe watoto wetu kwa sababu walimu hutumia maneno fulani wakiongea. Kama wazazi tunahitaji [kuelewa] kuwa pia tunaweza kuzungumza kwa sababu utamaduni wetu haufundishi kuwa...Kwa hivyo jifunze jinsi ya kuzungumza nao na kuwasikiza na kuwapa nidhamu. Unaweza kufanya hivyo kwa kutumia tu maneno yako...Kwa hivyo tunahitaji kuwaelimisha wazazi wetu ili tuweze kuwa pamoja na walimu na kuhakikisha kuwa tunaafikiana nao."

Wazazi wachache walikuwa na hofu ambayo wazazi katika jamii hii huwa nayo, kuwa walimu watawasiliana na DHS, kwa sababu ya matukio ya awali yanayoonyesha kutokuelewana kwa kitamaduni. Mzazi mmoja alisema kuwa shuleni watoto hufundishwa kwamba ikiwa wanadhulumiwa, wanapaswa kupiga simu namba 911 au kuwasiliana na walimu wao.



Haja ya Kuwafundisha Walimu Kuhusu Utofauti

Familia zilipendekeza suluhisho moja linalowezekeka, ambalo linaweza kusaidia walimu kuelewa tofauti kati ya tofauti za kitamaduni za wanafunzi nyumbani na shuleni ni kuwafundisha walimu kuhusu utofauti hizo. Walimu wanawatarajia watoto kutoka jamii hii kuwa na tabia tofauti na wanazotarajiwa kuwa nazo nyumbani.

"Nadhani tunapaswa kuwaelimisha walimu kuhusu utamaduni wetu...Wanapaswa kupewa na siku ya mapumziko kwa ajili ya kupewa mafundisho kuhusu tamaduni mbalimbali; tamaduni za Kiswahili, Kisomali na Kiafrika kwa jumla. Tunachofanya nyumbani na tunachofanya shuleni, na walimu wanapaswa kuja na ikiwa wana maswali yoyote wanapaswa kufundishwa kuwapigia wazazi simu kwanza kabla ya kupigia DHS."

Watoto...“wanasema, ‘Ukiniambia hivyo, mwalimu alinishauri nipige simu namba 911 kukushtaki.’ Kwa hivyo kwetu, tunapozungumza na watoto wetu, wakati mwingine inabidi tuseme ‘Basi, wacha!’ Kwahiyo tukisema hivyo wanachukulia kama dhuluma na kusema, tutapiga simu kwa 911.” Suala hili huchanganya zaidi kwa sababu wazazi huogopa kwamba walimu watachukua maelezo haya, wapige simu kwa DHS, na familia itaingia mashakani katika mfumo wa masuala ya watoto. Wazazi walisema kuwa walimu wanapaswa kuwasiliana na familia kuhusu hoja yao kabla ya kuwasiliana na DHS.

Matukio ya Ubaguzi na Dhana Potovu kutoka kwa Walimu na Shule

Familia hizi zilishirikisha mifano mingi kuhusu matukio ya ubaguzi. Mzazi mmoja alisema “Hii ndiyo changamoto kubwa zaidi, ubaguzi. Ubaguzi huanza katika miaka ya kwanza ya utotoni na unaweza kuendelea baadaye maishani.” Wazazi wameshuhudia walimu wakiwatendea watoto wao tofauti kielimu ikilinganishwa na watoto wengine darasani; watoto wameshuhudia kuna viongozi wa shule wanaowaambia watoto mambo mabaya; na wazazi wamebaguliwa wazi na wazazi wengine kwa msingi wa rangi yao.

“Mwalimu mmoja mkuu, yaani hata sio mwalimu, ambaye alimwita mtoto wangu ni mjinga. ‘Wewe ni Mwafrika, nyie Waafrika ni wajinga.’ Nilishangaa na kuuliza, Alikwambia hivyo yaani alimaanisha? Nilikwenda kwa mwalimu huyu mkuu na kuongea naye akasema ‘Ah, sikumaanisha hivyo.’ Hapana, haijailishi ulichomaanisha, ulimwambia mwanafunzi kitu na anahisi ‘Mwalimu mkuu alisema hivyo.’ Hili sio jambo zuri hata! Hupaswi kusema hivyo, hasa ukiwa mwalimu mkuu, kwa sababu wanaamini kuwa unajua zaidi ya walimu wa kawaida. Sikuumini. Sikupenda. Mtoto wangu ambaye alikuwa na umri wa miaka minne hivi, nilimtoa shuleni.”

“Kwahiyo hii ndiyo changamoto kubwa zaidi kwa wazazi, yaani ubaguzi unaofanywa na walimu, na wazazi. Nakumbuka siku moja nilikuwa nikipakua chakula cha mchana ambapo palikuwa na watoto kumi mezani. Wazazi fulani waliingia na kusimama karibu na mtoto fulani aliyeketi hapo na kuuliza ‘Mtoto huyu anatoka Somalia, yeyena mama na baba yake?’ Nikasema ndiyo. ‘Basi alipata vipi nywele hizi?’ Nikashangaa sana! Kwanza kabisa, kuna Wasomali wengi wenye nywele za aina nyingi.”

Mtoto mmoja alipokea viatu kutoka kwa Mwalimu Mkuu wa daraja la awali. Mzazi alifikiri kwamba mwalimu huyo

alichukulia kuwa mzazi na mtoto wake ni maskini na hawana vitu hivyo. Jambo hili, pamoja na kwamba Mwalimu Mkuu huyu alifanya hivi bila kuwasiliana na mzazi kwanza lilikuwa changamoto kama tulivyosikia kutoka kwa wazazi wengi—walimu hawafanyi juhudi kuzifahamu familia, au hawafanyi juhudi za kuboresha mawasiliano baina ya wazazi na walimu.

“Ukosefu wa heshima hiyo ya uhusiano wa mzazi na mwalimu hivi kwamba aseme ‘Naomba kumpa mtoto wako viatu hivi’ Na kunipa fursa ya kusema, Hapana, huwezi kumpa viatu hivyo, au Sivitaki. Unaelewa inachomaanisha? Kudhani kuwa anavihitaji kwa sababu yeye ni Mwafrika au yupo katika mpango wa Head Start ni kukisia mambo yasiyo sahihi.”

Mawasiliano Duni Baina ya Walimu na Wazazi Yanaathiri Familia

Wazazi wengi walishirikisha mifano ya ukosefu mkubwa wa mawasiliano yanayowahusu walimu Wazungu wa watoto wao, na walibainisha kuwa mara nyingi hawapati kiasi sawa cha maelezo kama wazazi wengine wanavyopata (wasio wa Kiafrika). Wazazi wawili walikumbwa na hali ambapo watoto wao walijeruhiwa na walihisi kuwa mwalimu hakuchukua hatua mwafaka au inayotosha.

“Nilimpeleka [mtoto wangu] hospitalini ambapo madaktari waliniarifu kuwa amevunjika. Nilidhani hakumwambia mtu yeyote kwa sababu sikupigiwa simu, sikutumiwa barua pepe; sikupokea chochote. Aliniambia, “Ndiyo, nilimwambia mwalimu kwamba mkono wangu ulikuwa unauma, lakini aliniambia niende niketi kwenye dawati langu.”...Kilichonifanya nikasirike na kughadhabika zaidi ni kwamba mtoto wangu ana rafiki wanaokwenda shule moja...ambao ni Wazungu. Nilizungumza naye [mama yake] kuhusu suala hili. Aliniambia, ‘Yeye [mwalimu] hunitumia barua pepe kila wakati msichana wangu anapopatwa na tatizo.’...Ndipo nilifahamu dhahiri kuwa palikuwa na ubaguzi.”

Mzazi mwingine aligundua kuwa mwalimu wa Head Start alikuwa akitegemea zaidi mawasiliano ya maandishi kuwasiliana na wazazi, ingawa wazazi wengi wa darasa hili hawakuweza kusoma Kiingereza. Hata hivyo, kwa sababu ya mila na matarajio ya kitamaduni ya familia nchini Marekani, wazazi ambao ni wahamiaji na wakimbizi huenda wasilalamike kuhusu suala hilo papo hapo kwa wafanyikazi katika mashirika au taasisi zinazotawaliwa na wazungu, haswa ikiwa hawajajaribu kujenga uhusiano na familia na kuelewa mitazamo yao.

“Nilikuwa msaidizi tu, wazazi wengi wanaotoka katika mila yetu hawapendi kulalamika sana. Tuna uvumilivu sana. tunastahimili mambo mengi. Mara nyingi sisi huzungumza mambo yakiharibika kabisa. Sisi tunaona mambo mengi sana lakini tunabaki kimya tu. hilo ndilo nililoligundua.”

Mzazi mmoja alielezea shida inayosababishwa na walimu wenye mtazamo duni kuhusu familia: “Walimu hushinda na watoto wetu zaidi ya sisi, lakini bado walimu wanajaribu kuwalaumu wazazi, badala ya wazazi kuwalaumu walimu...Lakini bado tunataka kufanya kazi pamoja na walimu, kwa hivyo tunatarajia walimu washirikiane na sisi kuwajumuisha watoto. Kwahiyo kuna ubaguzi unaofanyika katika shule zetu, na ukishughulikiwa kutoka juu mambao yatabadilika.”

Wazazi Wanataka Walimu Zaidi Wanaoelewa na Kuakisia Jamii Yao

Kando na elimu na mafunzo zaidi ya mwalimu/watoa mafunzo na elimu ambayo huwezesha uelewa maalum kuhusu tamaduni mbalimbali, njia nyingine za kutatua mzozo huu zinahitajika, kama vile kuwa na watoa huduma wanaofahamu tamaduni za wanao wahudumia. Mzazi mmoja ana mtoto mmoja anayefunzwa na mwalimu kutoka jamii yao, na mtoto mwingine mkubwa anayefunzwa na mwalimu mzungu Mmarekani, na mzazi huyu alibaini tofauti kubwa kati ya watoto hawa:

“Wakati huu, [mtoto wangu mdogo zaidi] anafunzwa na mtu wa jamii yetu. Akifanya makosa, mwalimu huyo atakuja kunitaarifu. Hawezi kukosa nidhamu shuleni kwa sababu anajua kuwa nitaambiwa na mwisho wa siku nitamuuliza. Atamjali kwa sababu anamfahamu binafsi...Hatasema mtoto wako ni mbaya, atauliza, tunaweza kufanya nini ili kushirikiana kutatua hali hii...Tutashirikiana, tunaelewa wapi tunakotoka...mwalimu na mzazi wanaweza kuwasiliana kwa njia gani, kushirikiana ili kuwasaidia watoto wetu? Hawafai kuwalaumu...lakini [mtoto wangu mkubwa zaidi] anapokosea, ninapokea barua pepe mbaya ikisema mtoto wako alifanya hivi na vile. Hatajitolea na kusema, Nitazungumza nawe kwa sababu hili halifai.”

Matarajio ni wanafunzi watoto watakuwa na walimu wengi zaidi wanaoendana na jamii yao, tamaduni na lugha—hata hivyo, kuna changamoto. “Ikiwa kuna shule katika jamii yetu, basi tunahitaji kuwa na walimu wetu. Ninaelewa kuwa kuna suala kuhusu malipo na ndio maana wanaendakutafuta kazi nyinginezo ambazo ni bora.”

Maangazio Muhimu

- ▶ Wazazi wangependa kuona vikundi vya kuwasaidia wazazi, elimu ya wazazi, fursa za mahusiano ya watoto, na huduma za kutembelewa nyumbani ambazo hutolewa na mashirika ya jamii na watu kutoka jamii yao, na wenye ufahamu wa tamaduni na lugha yao.
- ▶ Watoto wakifunzwa na mwalimu wa jamii yao hupata mazingira saidizi zaidi, na mawasiliano bora ya wazazi na walimu. Hata hivyo, malipo ya walimu yanahitaji kuboreshwa ili kuwavutia watu kutoka katika jamii yao wajiunge na taaluma ya ualimu.
- ▶ Suala la ubaguzi unaofanywa shuleni na walimu linapaswa kutatuliwa kutoka ngazi za juu.
- ▶ Walimu na wafanyakazi wa shule wanahitaji kufunzwa tamaduni za watoto wakiwa darasani. Walimu wanahitaji mafunzo ya kina yakukabiliana na ubaguzi wa rangi, hasa kuhusu kuelewa na kuwasiliana na wazaziwa asili tofauti nao.
- ▶ Kuimarisha mawasiliano na uhusiano na wazazi, ambao unazingatia tamaduni na hujenga kuaminiana ni jambo la msingi katika kuwashirikisha na kuzisaidia familia hizi. Kujenga kuaminiana kutaanza na watu wa jamii husika.
- ▶ Wazazi wanataka watoto wao wakue wakiona na kufurahia utamaduni na lugha zao zinazothaminiwa na kutekelezwa katika mazingira ya elimu ya utotoni.

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Family Listening Session

Hearing from Parents About Their Child Care Needs

Latino Network

In January 2020, a listening session with parents was held in Gresham, Oregon to learn about their needs for, and experiences with, child care in their community. This listening session was part of a series of family listening sessions funded by the Preschool Development Grant as a part of a statewide early learning needs assessment. The goal of the listening sessions was to hear family voices that have not yet been captured in understanding families' early learning needs and experiences. The sessions were co-designed, planned, and hosted by Latino Network and by researchers from AB Cultural Drivers, OSLC Developments, Inc., and Portland State University. Eight caregivers attended the session, 6 mothers and 2 grandmothers currently living in Gresham. Most caregivers had come to Oregon from various areas of Mexico (Oaxaca, Chiapas, Pachuca, and Hidalgo), and one was born in the United States. The listening session was conducted in Spanish.

Current Child Care Experiences and Building School Readiness

Who currently takes care of your children ages 0-5 years and what activities do they do?

Three mothers shared that they take care of their children themselves, two participants have children watched by friends or neighbors, and two participants take their children to child care centers. Mothers who care for their children at home said that they write, sing, dance, and do chores with their children at home, while others said their children draw, paint, dance, exercise, and do station activities while cared for by others. Only three participants said that their child's caregivers speak Spanish to their children and provide culturally specific activities. One mother shared that at her son's Head Start program "they speak Spanish to him, give him Mexican food, and make tortillas." "Les hablan en español, les dan comida mexicana, y les hacen tortillas." Another shared that for the Day of the Dead, the teachers asked her family to bring a 'pan de muerto' to the celebration where they made sugar skulls and spoke Spanish. Two other participants shared that those who take care of their children do not speak Spanish or support their child's culture or traditions.



What time or days of the week would you like your child to be in care?

As might be expected, different families had different needs:

Two mothers need care every day they go to work, which includes weekends. One of these mothers shared that “on weekends there is no care.”

“Los fines de semana, no hay cuidado de niños.”

The other adjusted her work schedule drastically. She works nights 2 days a week in order to coordinate care with her husband.

Another mother shared that her Head Start schedule works well, 12:30-4pm, Tuesday through Friday. Then a neighbor takes care of her child for a few hours before their father is available.

One mother takes her child to care only one day a week, while another mother needs care every day of the week.

How would you like your child to arrive at their ideal child care situation?

Every mother would prefer to take their child to their early child care provider, but multiple mothers wanted care that provided transportation to school. One of these mothers said this because she currently “has to take two children to school at the same time.”

“Tengo que llevar a dos niños a la escuela al mismo tiempo.”

How do educational and artistic activities help prepare your children for kindergarten?

Participants who have their children in preschool classrooms shared that educational and artistic activities allow their children to build confidence, become familiar with being in a classroom with teachers and other children, learn and practice English.

“Because they are developing more and they’re having more confidence with the teachers and with other children, they are not embarrassed, they are not insecure and so that in the future they will have a career and learn a little bit of everything.”

“Porque así se van desarrollando más y van teniendo más confianza con las maestras y con otros niños, no tienen pena, no son inseguros...y para que en un futuro lleguen a tener una carrera y que aprendan de todo un poco.”

“They are better prepared! My girl went to the Head Start, missed her mom and dad a lot, cried at school every day...Now, she likes school, and she hasn’t given me any complaints. It helped her a lot, because she’s been in a child care center since a young age and now she speaks English very well. She knows how to translate Spanish and English.”

“¡Se despiertan más! Mi niña iba al Head Start, extrañaba mucho a su mamá y papá, lloraba en la escuela todos los días, pero igual la dejaba. Y ahora sí le gusta la escuela, y no me ha dado ninguna queja. Sí le ayudó mucho, porque ha estado desde pequeña en un centro y ahora habla muy bien en inglés. Sabe traducir en español e inglés.”

Their Ideal Child Care Situation

What kinds of educational, artistic, and other activities would you like your children to receive to help them prepare for kindergarten?

Caregivers wanted their children to learn basic academic skills, such as the alphabet and numbers. They also wanted their children to learn to be social with other children, and learn to obey and be respectful of others. One caregiver wanted her child to **“learn the basics, their address [and] phone number, [so] if anything happens they can say it.”**

“que aprendieran lo más básico, su dirección, teléfono...en caso pase algo, puedan decirlo.”

Another caregiver wanted her child to also have opportunities for music and gymnastic activities, in addition to academic activities.

Concerns About the Quality of Care

Two mothers said that it is important that their child care provider feeds their children. While other mothers shared that their current care situation provides food, the two mothers who prioritized food expressed concern about their children not being able to eat.

"...there are many child care places where [they] do not feed them."

"...hay muchos lugares q no les dan de comer."

"I used to work hard and cook for my children every day. I noticed that my children were losing a lot of weight, the provider did not feed them the food I left for them, did not change their diapers, nor their clothes. I would provide everything to the babysitter to take care of them...One day, I left work early and went to pick up my children before the normal time and caught the provider eating the food that I had taken to my children that day...I took my children with me, the diapers and left the babysitter's house upset, but I didn't say anything."

"Yo antes trabajaba mucho y les cocinaba todos los días a mis hijos. Note que mis niños estaban adelgazando mucho, la proveedora no les daba de comer la comida que yo les dejaba, no les cambiaba los pañales, ni su ropa. Yo le llevaba todo a la chica para que me los cuidara. No me los cuidaba bien, yo un día salí del trabajo antes de tiempo y fui a recoger a mis niños antes de la hora de recogerlos y encontré a la proveedora comiendo la comida que yo les había llevado a mis hijos ese día y ellos comiendo la comida de ella, ella no cuidaba bien a los niños. Yo me lleve a los niños conmigo, los pañales y me salí de la casa de la babysitter molesta pero no le dije nada."

While focused on their children's access to food, these mothers' concerns indicate negative experiences with child care that failed to address their children's basic needs. These families are not always able to access quality care.

Finding Appropriate Care

What resources have you used in the past to find care?

Four mothers shared that they received recommendations for child care and preschool programs from a nurse that visited their home once a week to check on how their child was developing.

What challenges have you experienced in finding care?

Three mothers applied to put their children in Head Start, but encountered the same challenge of not meeting the income requirement. One of these mothers was on the waiting list for 2 years for Head Start, and, once she had her last child and started meeting the requirement, her child was ultimately admitted for the 2019-2020 year.

One mother shared that a family member's child was mistreated by his provider. He was withdrawn and afraid of the provider. She decided not to put her child in daycare because of this. Two other mothers shared some mistrust of care providers, and some of their care decisions have been informed by this mistrust.

A mom who has her son in a special center for autistic children said, **"In my case where my child goes to, he gets scared, it's a center where there are children who do not speak and scream, my child gets scared and does not want to go there...Once, my son didn't want to go to the center...He told us he didn't want to see [his therapist]."** The mother asked the principal to change her son's therapist. **"I never knew what happened...the school said that because he saw an episode of a girl who cried a lot and did not stop crying, that was the reason why my boy was crying but [I knew] that it wasn't because of that."** In the end, they changed the child's therapist.

"En mi caso donde mi niño va, se asusta, es un centro donde hay niños que no hablan y gritan, mi niño se asusta y no quiere ir...Una vez, mi hijo no quería ir al centro...Nos decía que no quería verlo (terapeuta)." La mamá le pidió a la directora que le cambiaran de terapeuta. **"Nunca supe que pasó...la escuela dice que porque el niño vio un episodio de una niña que lloraba mucho y no paraba de llorar y por eso el niño lloraba, pero la mamá sabe que no fue por eso."** Así que al final sí le cambiaron de terapeuta.

"When my son went to [school], I always would tell my child that nobody should touch his private parts, only mom and dad. The boy knew that no one should touch his private parts, and he didn't even want the teacher to touch him to change his diaper."

“Cuando mi hijo fue a la escuela, yo siempre le decía a mi niño que: ‘nadie te debe de tocar tus partes íntimas; sólo mamá y papá. El niño sabía que nadie le debía de tocar sus partes íntimas, y hasta no quería que la maestra lo tocara para cambiarle el pañal.”

Some mothers shared that their children struggle to communicate in English. One of these mothers wanted to find care in Spanish so that her child could be understood. This was less important to other mothers in the session, because their children speak both Spanish and English. One mother struggled to find care in Spanish.

Have you ever had to leave work to take care of your children because paying to care for them is too expensive?

Four mothers shared that the cost of care impacted their choice to put their child in care or work.

“Oh yes, I’ve left work, I was paying \$34 a day (for babysitter), I worked only 6 hours and I was earning only \$12 an hour, it wasn’t worth it.”

“Oh si, yo si he dejado el trabajo, estaba pagando \$34 al día, yo trabajaba solamente 6 horas y ganaba solo \$12 por hora; no me salía a cuenta.”

“I’d like to leave him at a daycare, but I started to check daycare prices and it was too expensive, even for a few hours, so I made the decision to stay home with him...I’m just going to wait for him to go to school, this next year he’s going to school.”

“Si me gustaría dejarlo en una guardería, pero empecé a averiguar los precios de las guarderías y están demasiado caras, aun por pocas horas, por eso mejor tomé la decisión de quedarme con él en casa...solo voy a esperar que vaya a la escuela, este año que viene va a la escuela.”

“I’ve found a program that has started at the school where you can leave them there, but it’s like \$75 an hour for care, it is too expensive.”

“Ha entrado a la escuela a un programa que los puedes dejar ahí, pero está como \$75 la hora por el cuidado, es demasiado caro.”

“...Sometimes it’s not convenient to go to work because they charge much more. State [licensed] child care providers charge more.”

“A veces no nos conviene ir a trabajar porque cobran mucho más. Las proveedoras del estado cobran más.”

Support for Special Needs

“My child has had about four speech therapies, but I felt that they didn’t help him. The therapists would tell me to play with him. I thought they were going to teach him how to pronounce the words, to give names to things, and make him repeat. They would just play with cars or the ball. I didn’t feel that it helped him at all...My boy learned because I would go to the dollar store and buy him flash cards and he learned that way.”

Her son is currently in a preschool program at Earl Boyles, and she shared that **“he’s learning a lot and talking more.”**



Their Needs as Parents

What would help you be the best parent you can be?

Parents in this session wished they had more patience with their children:

“Be tolerant and stay calm when children are young.”

“Ser tolerante y guardar la calma cuando los niños son pequeños.”

“Patience, because we stress at work and we lash out at them and they are not to blame.”

“Paciencia porque nos estresamos en el trabajo y nos desquitamos con ellos y no tienen la culpa.”

Key Takeaways

- ▶ These families value educational and artistic activities for children because they foster familiarity with the school system and build self-confidence.
- ▶ Home visiting nurses and Early Intervention staff were important referral resources for finding child care and specialized support.
- ▶ Some families have had negative experiences with child care providers, and these experiences have influenced their child care decisions.
- ▶ Mothers were challenged by the cost of care, which often exceeds what they make at work and forces mothers to stop working.
- ▶ Some of these families struggled to access public child care because they made too much money to meet the income requirements, but did not make enough money to afford to pay out of pocket for child care.
- ▶ Some of these families spent a long time on waitlists for a spot to open up in a public child care program.
- ▶ About one half of the families have care providers who speak Spanish and do culturally specific activities with their children, and about one half of the families do not. Some families shared that they and their children struggle to communicate in English, and one family struggled to find care in Spanish.
- ▶ Based on their personal experiences or the experiences of close family, some of these families displayed distrust of child care providers and therapists that has influenced their care decisions.

“Mi niño ha tenido como 4 terapias del habla, pero sentí que no le ayudó. Las terapeutas me decían que juegue con él. Pensé que le iban a enseñar a pronunciar las palabras, a poner nombres a las cosas y hacerles repetir, solo se ponía a jugar con los carritos o a la pelota, no sentí que le sirvió de nada... El niño aprendió porque yo iba al dollar store y le compraba flash cars y aprendió así. Yo le enseñe a mi hijo desde que estaba pequeño, le iba explicando las cosas. Las terapeutas no le ayudaban en repetirle las palabras.”

“De ahí el empezó en la escuela en Earl Boyles, ahí está aprendiendo mucho y hablando más.”

Another mother said: “[The therapists] would give me guidelines of what to do at home with him, they told me to organize his toys in a category, and motivate him by playing and ask him what he wants to play with. Do you want blocks? Cars? He would just point at things. [The therapists] would come for 45 minutes but would never model to him how to pronounce the words.”

“[The therapist] me dieron pautas para que yo hiciera con él, me decían que separa los juegos en categorías, y jugara con él para motivarlo a que dijera que quería jugar. ¿Quieres bloques carros? Antes solo señalaba. Venían [las terapeutas] por 45 minutos pero nunca modelaban como debía de pronunciar las palabras.”

Another mother had a hard time finding the therapy her child needed in Spanish. “It took a lot of work to find the place where my child goes to. I was looking for therapies in Spanish, I went to a place but they rejected me because nobody spoke Spanish. Now my child goes to a center called CARD (Center for Autism and Related Disorders). The director speaks Spanish, but the therapies are in English.” She relied on a referral from an Early Intervention Program staff member to find this center.

“Para encontrar el lugar donde está yendo mi hijo me costo mucho trabajo, yo estaba buscando terapias en español. Fui a un lugar pero me rechazaron porque nadie hablaba español. Ahora mi hijo va un centro que se llama CARD, el director habla español pero la terapias son en inglés.”

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Opiniones de padres sobre el cuidado infantil



Red Latina

En enero de 2020, se llevó a cabo una jornada de conversación comunitaria con padres en Gresham, Oregon, para conocer sus necesidades de cuidado infantil y sus experiencias al respecto en la comunidad. Esta jornada formó parte de una serie de jornadas con familias que se llevaron a cabo con fondos provenientes de la Subvención para el Desarrollo de la Educación Preescolar en el marco de una evaluación de las necesidades de aprendizaje temprano en todo el estado. El objetivo de las jornadas era escuchar las opiniones de familias que aún no estaban registradas para comprender las necesidades y las experiencias de aprendizaje temprano de las familias. Las jornadas fueron codiseñadas, planificadas y organizadas por Latino Network y por investigadores de AB Cultural Drivers, de la Universidad Estatal de Portland y del Centro de Aprendizaje Social de Oregon. Ocho cuidadoras asistieron a la jornada, 6 madres y 2 abuelas que actualmente viven en Gresham. La mayoría de las cuidadoras habían llegado a Oregon desde diversas áreas de México (Oaxaca, Chiapas, Pachuca, Hidalgo) y una había nacido en los EE. UU. La jornada de conversación comunitaria se llevó a cabo en español.

Experiencias actuales con el cuidado infantil y desarrollo de la preparación escolar

¿Quién cuida actualmente a sus hijos de 0 a 5 años y qué actividades realizan?

Tres madres comentaron que cuidan a sus hijos ellas mismas, dos participantes dejan a sus hijos al cuidado de amigos o vecinos, y dos participantes llevan a sus hijos a centros de cuidado infantil. Las madres que cuidan a sus hijos en el hogar dijeron que ellas escriben, cantan, bailan y hacen las tareas del hogar con sus hijos, mientras que las otras dijeron que sus hijos dibujan, pintan, bailan, hacen ejercicios y realizan actividades por estaciones mientras otras personas cuidan de ellos. Solo tres participantes dijeron que los cuidadores de sus hijos les hablan en español a los niños y les proporcionan actividades específicas desde el punto de vista cultural. Una



¿En qué horarios o días de la semana les gustaría que sus hijos estén bajo cuidado?

Como era de esperar, las distintas familias tenían necesidades diferentes:

Dos madres necesitan cuidado infantil todos los días que van a trabajar, lo que incluye los fines de semana. Una de estas madres dijo: "los fines de semana, no hay cuidado de niños." La otra adaptó drásticamente su horario de trabajo. Trabaja de noche dos días a la semana para coordinar el cuidado con su marido.

Otra madre comentó que el horario de su programa Head Start funciona bien (de martes a viernes, de 12:30 a 4:00pm). Luego, un vecino cuida a sus hijos durante un par de horas hasta que el padre está disponible.

Una madre lleva a sus hijos a cuidado infantil solo un día a la semana, mientras que otra madre necesita cuidado todos los días de la semana.

¿Cómo les gustaría que sus hijos llegaran a su situación ideal de cuidado infantil?

Todas las madres prefieren llevar a sus hijos al proveedor de cuidado en la primera infancia, pero varias madres querían un cuidado que proporcionara transporte hacia la escuela. Una de las madres dijo esto porque, actualmente, afirma: "Tengo que llevar a dos niños a la escuela al mismo tiempo."

madre dijo que, en el programa Head Start de su hijo, "Les hablan en español, les dan comida mexicana, y les hacen tortillas." Otra comentó que, para el Día de los Muertos, las maestras le pidieron a su familia que llevara un 'pan de muerto' a la celebración, donde hicieron calaveras de alfeñique y hablaron en español. Otras dos participantes dijeron que quienes cuidan a sus hijos no hablan español ni apoyan la cultura ni las tradiciones de sus hijos.

¿De qué manera las actividades educativas y artísticas ayudan a sus hijos a prepararse para el kínder?

Las participantes que tienen hijos en los salones de clases de preescolar comentaron que las actividades educativas y artísticas permiten a sus hijos desarrollar la confianza, familiarizarse con el hecho de estar en un salón de clases con maestras y otros niños, y aprender y practicar inglés.

"Porque así se van desarrollando más y van teniendo más confianza con las maestras y con otros niños, no tienen pena, no son inseguros...y para que en un futuro lleguen a tener una carrera y que aprendan de todo un poco."

"¡Se despiertan más! Mi niña iba al Head Start, extrañaba mucho a su mamá y papá, lloraba en la escuela todos los días, pero igual la dejaba. Y ahora sí le gusta la escuela, y no me ha dado ninguna queja. Sí le ayudó mucho, porque ha estado desde pequeña en un centro y ahora habla muy bien en inglés. Sabe traducir en español e inglés."

Su situación ideal de cuidado infantil

¿Qué tipos de actividades educativas, artísticas y de otro tipo les gustaría que sus hijos reciban para ayudarlos a prepararse para el kínder?

Las cuidadoras querían que sus hijos aprendieran habilidades académicas básicas, como el abecedario y los números. También querían que sus hijos aprendieran a ser sociables con otros niños, y que aprendieran a obedecer y ser respetuosos con los demás. Una cuidadora quería que sus hijos "aprendieran lo más básico, su dirección, teléfono...en caso pase algo, puedan decirlo." Otra cuidadora quería que sus hijos también tuvieran oportunidades de realizar actividades musicales y gimnásticas, además de las actividades académicas.



Inquietudes sobre la calidad del cuidado

Dos madres dijeron que es importante que su proveedor de cuidado infantil alimente a sus hijos. Mientras las demás madres manifestaron que su situación de cuidado actual proporciona comida, las dos madres que priorizaron la comida expresaron inquietudes con respecto a que sus hijos no pueden comer.

“...hay muchos lugares que no les dan de comer.”

“Yo antes trabajaba mucho y les cocinaba todos los días a mis hijos. Noté que mis niños estaban adelgazando mucho, la proveedora no les daba de comer la comida que yo les dejaba, no les cambiaba los pañales, ni su ropa. Yo le llevaba todo a la chica para que me los cuidara. No me los cuidaba bien, yo un día salí del trabajo antes de tiempo y fui a recoger a mis niños antes de la hora de recogerlos y encontré a la proveedora comiendo la comida que yo les había llevado a mis hijos ese día y ellos comiendo la comida de ella, ella no cuidaba bien a los niños. Yo me llevé a los niños conmigo, los pañales y me salí de la casa de la babysitter molesta pero no le dije nada.”

Si bien se enfocaron en el acceso de sus hijos a la comida, las inquietudes de estas madres indican experiencias negativas con un cuidado infantil que no abordó las necesidades básicas de sus hijos. Estas familias no siempre han podido acceder a cuidado de calidad.

Encontrar el cuidado infantil adecuado

¿Qué recursos han utilizado en el pasado para encontrar cuidado infantil?

Cuatro madres dijeron que recibieron recomendaciones para programas preescolares y de cuidado infantil de una enfermera que visitaba sus hogares una vez a la semana para controlar cómo se estaban desarrollando sus hijos.

¿Qué desafíos han enfrentado para encontrar cuidado infantil?

Tres madres solicitaron colocar a sus hijos en un programa Head Start, pero enfrentaron el mismo desafío de no cumplir con los requisitos de ingresos económicos. Una de estas madres estuvo en lista de espera durante dos años para un programa Head Start y, una vez que tuvo su último hijo y comenzó a reunir los requisitos, su hijo fue finalmente admitido para el año 2019-2020.

Una madre comentó que el hijo de un familiar sufrió maltrato por parte de su proveedor. Se mostraba retraído y tenía miedo a su proveedor. Ella decidió no colocar a su hijo en una guardería infantil por este motivo. Otras dos madres compartieron cierta desconfianza con respecto a los proveedores de cuidado infantil, y algunas de sus decisiones con respecto al cuidado infantil se han basado en esta desconfianza.

Una madre que tenía a su hijo en un centro especial para niños autistas dijo: **“En mi caso donde mi niño va, se asusta, es un centro donde hay niños que no hablan y gritan, mi niño se asusta y no quiere ir...Una vez, mi hijo no quería ir al centro...Nos decía que no quería verlo (terapeuta). La mamá le pidió a la directora que le cambiaran de terapeuta. ‘Nunca supe que pasó...la escuela dice que porque el niño vio un episodio de una niña que lloraba mucho y no paraba de llorar y por eso el niño lloraba, pero la mamá sabe que no fue por eso.’ Así que al final sí le cambiaron de terapeuta.”** Al final, cambiaron el terapeuta del niño.

“Cuando mi hijo fue a la escuela, yo siempre le decía a mi niño que: nadie te debe de tocar tus partes íntimas; sólo mamá y papá. El niño sabía que nadie le debía de tocar sus partes íntimas, y hasta no quería que la maestra lo tocara para cambiarle el pañal.”

Algunas madres manifestaron que sus hijos tienen dificultades para comunicarse en inglés. Una de estas madres quería encontrar cuidado infantil en español para que pudieran comprender a su hijo. Esto era menos importante para otras madres en la jornada porque sus hijos hablan tanto en inglés como en español. Una madre tuvo dificultades para encontrar cuidado infantil en español.

¿Han tenido alguna vez que dejar de trabajar para cuidar a sus hijos porque el cuidado infantil es demasiado costoso?

Cuatro madres dijeron que el costo del cuidado infantil impactó en la decisión de colocar a sus hijos en cuidado infantil o trabajar.

“Oh sí, yo sí he dejado el trabajo, estaba pagando \$34 al día, yo trabajaba solamente 6 horas y ganaba solo \$12 por hora; no me salía a cuenta.”

“Sí me gustaría dejarlo en una guardería, pero empecé a averiguar los precios de las guarderías y están demasiado caras, aun por pocas horas, por eso mejor tomé la decisión de quedarme con él en casa... solo voy a esperar que vaya a la escuela, este año que viene va a la escuela.”

“Ha entrado a la escuela a un programa que los puedes dejar ahí, pero está como \$75 la hora por el cuidado, es demasiado caro.”

“...A veces no nos conviene ir a trabajar porque cobran mucho más. Las proveedoras del estado cobran más.”

Apoyo para necesidades especiales

“Mi niño ha tenido como 4 terapias del habla, pero sentí que no le ayudó. Las terapeutas me decían que juegue con él. Pensé que le iban a enseñar a pronunciar las palabras, a poner nombres a las cosas y hacerles repetir, solo se ponía a jugar con los carritos o a la pelota, no sentí que le sirvió de nada... El niño aprendió porque yo iba al dollar store y le compraba flash cars y aprendió así. Yo le enseñe a mi hijo desde que estaba pequeño, le iba explicando las cosas. Las terapeutas no le ayudaban en repetirse las palabras.”

“De ahí él empezó en la escuela en Earl Boyles, ahí está aprendiendo mucho y hablando más.”

Otra madre dijo: “[Las terapeutas] me dieron pautas para que yo hiciera con él, me decían que separa los juegos en categorías, y jugara con él para motivarlo a que dijera que quería jugar. ¿Quieres bloques carros? Antes solo señalaba. Venían (las terapeutas) por 45 minutos pero nunca modelaban como debía de pronunciar las palabras.”

Otra madre tuvo dificultades para encontrar la terapia que su hijo necesitaba en español.

“Para encontrar el lugar donde está yendo mi hijo me costo mucho trabajo, yo estaba buscando terapias en español. Fui a un lugar pero me rechazaron porque nadie hablaba español. Ahora mi hijo va un centro que se llama CARD, el director habla español pero la terapias son en inglés.”



Sus necesidades como padres

¿Qué los ayudaría a desempeñar sus roles de padres de la mejor manera posible?

Los padres que participaron en esta jornada deseaban tener más paciencia con sus hijos:

“Ser tolerante y guardar la calma cuando los niños son pequeños.”

“Paciencia porque nos estresamos en el trabajo y nos desquitamos con ellos y no tienen la culpa.”

Aportes clave

- ▶ Estas familias valoran las actividades educativas y artísticas para los niños porque promueven la familiaridad con el sistema escolar y desarrollan la autoconfianza.
- ▶ Las enfermeras de los programas de visitas domiciliarias y el personal del programa de intervención temprana fueron recursos de referencias importantes para encontrar cuidado infantil y apoyo especializado.
- ▶ Algunas familias han tenido experiencias negativas con los proveedores de cuidado infantil, y estas experiencias han influido en las decisiones sobre el cuidado de sus hijos.
- ▶ Las madres enfrentan el desafío del costo del cuidado infantil, que suele superar lo que ganan en el trabajo y obliga a las madres a dejar de trabajar.
- ▶ Algunas de estas familias tienen dificultades para acceder al cuidado infantil público porque ganan demasiado dinero para cumplir con los requisitos de ingresos económicos, pero no ganan lo suficiente para poder pagar el cuidado infantil de su propio bolsillo.
- ▶ Algunas de estas familias pasan mucho tiempo en listas de espera, aguardando una vacante en un programa público de cuidado infantil.
- ▶ Casi la mitad de las familias tienen proveedores de cuidado infantil que hablan en español y realizan actividades específicas desde el punto de vista cultural con los niños, y aproximadamente la otra mitad de las familias no cuentan con esta situación. Algunas familias comentan que ellas y sus hijos tienen dificultades para comunicarse en inglés, y a una familia le resultó difícil encontrar cuidado infantil en español.
- ▶ En función de sus experiencias personales o las experiencias de familiares cercanos, algunas de estas familias mostraron una desconfianza en los terapeutas y proveedores de cuidado infantil que afectó sus decisiones con respecto al cuidado infantil. Informaron que no comprenden los tratamientos que se les proporcionan a sus hijos y que los terapeutas no se los han explicado.

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Family Listening Session

Hearing from Parents About Their Child Care Needs

Latino Network

In January 2020, a listening session with parents and caregivers was held at the Latino Network in Tualatin, Oregon. This listening session was part of a series of family listening sessions funded by the Preschool Development Grant as a part of a statewide early learning needs assessment. The listening session was co-designed, organized, and hosted by Latino Network and AB Cultural Drivers in partnership with OSLC Developments, Inc. and Portland State University. The goal of the listening sessions was to hear family voices that have not yet been captured in understanding families' early learning needs and experiences. This listening session was held in Spanish with 10 mothers of young children.

Current Child Care Experiences and Building School Readiness

Current Early Learning Supports and Benefits

Of the ten parents, two mothers reported using a child care center, two had children enrolled in Head Start, and nine reported providing care for their young children themselves as least part of the year.

Parents talked about a variety of things they did with their children, such as taking them to parks, playing games, doing crafts, having children paint, and taking them to community activity centers for swimming and sports. Although mothers who cared for their children reported teaching them about cultural traditions, and eight parents indicated that their provider (including themselves) spoke Spanish to their children, only five said that their provider did activities that supported their children's cultural traditions.

"They only speak the language, but they don't do anything else."

"Ellos solo hablan el idioma, pero no hacen nada más."

Two parents said that their local libraries provided child-friendly activities that supported their cultural traditions, and two indicated that their older child's elementary schools did some celebrations related to traditional holidays such as the "Day of the Dead." One parent reported her child's school asking parents for input about culturally responsive activities that the school could host:

"At [elementary school] where my child goes, they offer cultural activities, folk dances, they're always asking what to celebrate."

"En la escuela donde va mi niño, [elementary school] sí celebran actividades culturales, bailes folclóricos, siempre están preguntando qué celebrar."

All parents agreed that having children participate in early learning programs is important for helping them be ready for school. Three described significant barriers that get in the way of these opportunities, however, including lack of transportation (three parents reported driving long distances to attend programming provided by Latino Network), families not qualifying for Head Start, long waiting lists for Head Start, lack of programs and child care close in or near their locations and the high costs of programs other than Head Start.

“My daughter qualified for Head Start but I could not take her there because there was no bus.”

“Mi hija calificó para Head Start, pero no la pude llevar porque no había bus.”

“There are families who do not qualify for Head Start. In Mexico, there is public free preschool education. Here you have to wait until age 5 to send your kids to school. I’d like to have public preschools for free because it helps children get ready for kindergarten. There should be priority for moms who work...everything you earn goes to the care of the child.”

“Hay familias que no califican para el Head Start. En México hay escuela pública preescolar, aquí tienes que esperar hasta los 5 años. Me gustaría que hubiese preescolares públicos (gratis) porque les ayuda a los niños a desenvolverse para que cuando lleguen al kínder vayan más preparados. Se debería dar prioridad a las mamás que trabajan, todo lo que uno gana, va al cuidado del niño.”

“Programs should have scholarships according to family income and number of children in the family. I live in Roosevelt, and there’s no Head Start there.”

Several also wanted to have access to more programs and activities that support Spanish language development and Hispanic/Latinx cultural traditions.

“My parents do not speak English...my daughter understands but she does not answer in Spanish. I’d like there to be more activities for the kids but that focus more on the language, because my girl is losing it, and through language, teach them traditions and culture. Where I live, there are no such classes...I have to come all the way here to access those programs.”

“Mis papás no hablan el inglés...mi hija entiende, pero no contesta en español. Me gustaría que hubiese más actividades para los niños pero que se enfocaran más en

el idioma, porque mi niña lo está perdiendo. Y a través del idioma, enseñarles las tradiciones y cultura. No hay esas clases por donde yo vivo...tengo que venir hasta acá para acceder a esos programas.”

“My child is at Bridgeport school, it’s a Spanish immersion school, they start with 90% Spanish. I want my child to be able to read, write and speak Spanish.”

“Mi niño está en la escuela Bridgeport, es una escuela de inmersión en español, ahí empiezan con 90% en español. Quiero que mi niño sepa leer en español, escribir y hablarlo.”

There was consensus among these parents that the people caring for their children should help both children and families be ready for kindergarten.

“[program] helped my child to be prepared for kindergarten, she has not had a preschool experience. She knows the colors and letters, otherwise she wouldn’t have learned it at home. As a mother, I feel good, we are given a lot of help on how to educate our children in many ways.”

“[program] le han ayudado mucho a mi niña a prepararse al Kinder, no había tenido un preescolar que la prepare. Ya sabe los colores y las letras, si no, no lo hubiera aprendido en casa. Me siento bien, a nosotros nos están dando mucha ayuda de cómo educarlos a ellos, en muchos aspectos.”

“Juntos al Kinder is a program that starts in the summer for children who start kindergarten in the fall and gives parents a lot of information that they should know before their kids enter kindergarten, they guide and teach them what the [parent] conferences are all about, the parents really like it.”

“Juntos al Kinder es un programa que empieza en el verano para los niños que empiezan en el kínder y que les dan mucha información que deben de saber antes de entrar al kínder, los guían y les enseñan de qué se tratan las conferencias [de padres].”

The importance of linguistically and culturally specific providers and supports was emphasized:

“Head Start and Juntos Aprendemos gives us the option to volunteer in the class so this way we can get involved in our children’s education, to feel safe. In this program there are many families who speak Spanish, and so I feel more confident because we are immigrants and we speak the same language.”



Ideal Child Care Setting

Families described their ideal child care setting as being close to the families' home and providing mostly full-day care (9am-2pm), although some needed longer days (9am-9pm; 8:30am-3pm). Parents mentioned the importance of having a bus for transportation, and one indicated she would like the option for parents to volunteer at the child care setting for lower costs. As mentioned previously, for some families volunteering in the classroom also may create greater feelings of trust in the program provider and build safety and community. In terms of what they felt was most important to help their children learn and be successful, parents spoke of a variety of things, including creative activities (drafts, music, dancing), sports, social skills ("good manners", personal responsibility, learning about routines and schedules), and academics (reading and writing in both English and Spanish, science, how to write their names, etc.).

What would help you "be the best mom or dad you can be?"

Parents described a number of parenting support that they valued, including more parent educational programs, parenting classes, and online parenting classes; more scholarships for children to do extracurricular activities (dance, music, sports); and specifically more hours of culturally specific programming such as *Aprendiendo Juntos*, another program of Latino Network.

"En Head Start y 'Juntos Aprendemos' nos dan la opción de ser voluntarios en la clase y así nos podemos involucrar en la educación de los niños, para sentirse seguros. En este programa hay muchas familias que hablan español y así me siento más segura por el hecho que somos inmigrantes y hablamos el mismo idioma."

Helping Support Families with Children with Special Needs

Two parents recounted examples of how early learning program providers can play an important role in helped parents to recognize, and get help for, children who were having challenges (one autistic, the other with obtaining glasses):

"I noticed a child I took care of was falling very often...I informed the mother and finally she took her to the doctor, and it turned out the girl needs glasses. The parents hadn't noticed because they were working so hard. Sometimes people who take care of children look at things that parents don't look at because they're always working."

"Notaba que la niña que tenía en mi cuidado se caía muchísimo... Le informé a la mamá y finalmente ella la llevó al doctor, y la niña necesitaba lentes. Los padres no se habían dado cuenta porque andan trabajando mucho."

"[I cared for two children who] isolated themselves, they bit a lot too, did not interact with other children. [I] informed one of the mothers on what was going on with her child and the mom did not believe it, until she took the child to the doctor and they were able to assess the child and confirm that the child was autistic. The children were transferred to a special school. The caregivers helped the parents realize the needs of their children."

"[tenía dos niños] y ellos se aislaban, mordían mucho también, no interactuaban con otros niños. [Yo] informé a la mamá lo que pasaba con el niño en su cuidado y la mamá no creía, hasta que lo llevó al doctor y le pudieron hacer un examen y confirmar que el niño era autista. Los niños fueron transferidos a una escuela especial. Los cuidadores de niños ayudan a los papás a darse cuenta de las necesidades que tienen los niños."



Another parent of a child with special needs described how one program offered by Latino Network helped her:

“I looked for this program because my child is a child with special needs, is hyperactive and in school they usually do not give much importance. He regularly spent time in the hallway, because he was in his own world. I watched my child in class when a teacher told me how my child was and I realized I had to help my son with his homework and that’s why this program helped me a lot like helping my son. At home I would review materials with my son so he could level himself at school. These programs support you a lot and you feel you are not alone and there are resources for oneself.”

Este programa...yo lo busque porque mi niño es un niño especial, es hiperactivo y en las escuelas por lo general no le dan mucha importancia, regularmente se la pasaba en el pasillo, porque el andaba en su mundo, son muchos niños para una sola maestra, y la maestra no puede enfocarse en un niño especial porque tiene que ayudar a los demás. Entonces mi niño estaba atrasadísimo en la escuela. Y yo estaba buscando ayudarlo a mi hijo, observé a mi niño en la clase cuando una profesora me dijo cómo estaba mi niño y me di cuenta que tenía que ayudar a mi hijo en la tarea y por eso este programa me ayudó mucho como ayudar a mi hijo. En la casa yo repasaba con mi hijo para que el se pueda nivelar en la escuela. Estos programas te apoyan mucho y te sientes que no estas sola y hay recursos para uno.”

Key Takeaways

- ▶ Culturally and linguistically specific programming was seen as valuable for both parents and children in helping build readiness for kindergarten and preparing parents to understand the school system and building a support system with other parents and educators of their culture.
- ▶ Having opportunities to connect with other Spanish-speaking parents as well as Spanish-speaking providers builds trust and cultivates a feeling of safety for families.
- ▶ Early learning providers can play an important role in helping parents identify, understand, and seek help for children with special needs prior to starting school and providing referrals.
- ▶ A significant challenge for these mothers was the lack of child care near their homes and the need to transport children long distances to attend the programs offered by Head Start and/or Latino Network.
- ▶ Generally, these parents did not perceive that child care providers, even if they were Spanish speaking, provided activities that supported their cultural traditions and values, but would like to see these things integrated into their children’s early learning experiences.

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Responsive Evaluation & Research

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Opiniones de padres sobre el cuidado infantil

Red Latina

En enero de 2020, se realizó una jornada de conversación comunitaria con padres y cuidadores de Red Latina en Tualatin, Oregon. Esta jornada formó parte de una serie de jornadas con familias que se llevaron a cabo con fondos provenientes de la Subvención para el Desarrollo de la Educación Preescolar en el marco de una evaluación de las necesidades de aprendizaje temprano en todo el estado. La jornada fue codiseñada, planificada y organizada por Latino Network y AB Cultural Drivers, en colaboración con la Universidad Estatal de Portland y OSLC Developments, Inc. El objetivo de las jornadas era escuchar las opiniones de familias que aún no estaban registradas para comprender las necesidades y las experiencias de aprendizaje temprano de las familias. Esta jornada de conversación comunitaria se realizó en español y contó con la participación de 10 madres de niños pequeños.

Experiencias actuales con el cuidado infantil y desarrollo de la preparación escolar

Apoyos y beneficios actuales relacionados con el aprendizaje temprano

De las 10 madres, dos informaron que envían a sus hijos a un centro de cuidado infantil, dos habían inscrito a sus hijos en un programa Head Start y nueve informaron que cuidan a sus hijos pequeños ellas mismas, al menos durante una parte del año.

Las madres hablaron sobre diversas cosas que hacen con sus hijos, como llevarlos a un parque, jugar juegos, hacer artesanías, hacerlos pintar y llevarlos a centros de actividades comunitarios para que naden y hagan deportes. Si bien las madres que cuidan a sus hijos informaron que les enseñan tradiciones culturales, y ocho madres señalaron que sus proveedores (incluidas ellas mismas) les hablan a sus hijos en español, solo cinco dijeron que sus proveedores realizan actividades que apoyan las tradiciones culturales de sus hijos.

“Ellos solo hablan el idioma, pero no hacen nada más.”

Dos madres dijeron que sus bibliotecas locales proporcionan actividades apropiadas para niños que apoyan sus tradiciones culturales, y dos indicaron que las escuelas primarias de sus hijos mayores realizaron algunas celebraciones relacionadas con



feriados tradicionales, como el “Día de los Muertos.” Una madre informó que la escuela de su hijo les pidió a los padres opiniones sobre actividades sensibles desde el punto de vista cultural que la escuela podría realizar:

“En la escuela donde va mi niño, [elementary school] sí celebran actividades culturales, bailes folclóricos, siempre están preguntando qué celebrar.”

Todas las madres estuvieron de acuerdo en que es importante que sus hijos participen en programas de aprendizaje a temprana edad porque esto los ayuda a prepararse para la escuela. No obstante, tres madres describieron barreras considerables para el aprovechamiento de estas oportunidades, que incluyen falta de transporte (tres madres informaron que conducen grandes distancias para asistir a programas proporcionados por Red Latina), familias que no reúnen los requisitos para un programa Head Start, largas listas de espera para Head Start, falta de programas y cuidado infantil cerca de sus domicilios, y altos costos de los programas aparte de Head Start.

“Mi hija calificó para Head Start, pero no la pude llevar porque no había bus.”

“Hay familias que no califican para el Head Start. En México hay escuela pública preescolar, aquí tienes que esperar hasta los 5 años. Me gustaría que hubiese preescolares públicos (gratis) porque les ayuda a los niños a desenvolverse para que cuando lleguen al kínder vayan más preparados. Se debería dar prioridad a las mamás que trabajan, todo lo que uno gana, va al cuidado del niño.”

“Los programas deberían tener becas de acuerdo con los ingresos económicos familiares y la cantidad de hijos en la familia. Yo vivo en Roosevelt y allí no hay ningún programa Head Start.”

Varias madres también quieren tener acceso a más programas y actividades que apoyen el desarrollo del idioma español y las tradiciones culturales hispanas/latinas.

“Mis papás no hablan el inglés...mi hija entiende, pero no contesta en español. Me gustaría que hubiese más actividades para los niños pero que se enfocaran más en el idioma, porque mi niña lo está perdiendo. Y a través del idioma, enseñarles las tradiciones y cultura. No hay esas clases por donde yo vivo... tengo que venir hasta acá para acceder a esos programas.”

“Mi niño está en la escuela Bridgeport, es una escuela de inmersión en español, ahí empiezan con 90% en español. Quiero que mi niño sepa leer en español, escribir y hablarlo.”

Hubo consenso entre estas madres en cuanto a que las personas que cuidan a sus hijos deberían ayudar tanto a los niños como a las familias a prepararse para el kínder.

“[Los programas] le han ayudado mucho a mi niña a prepararse al Kinder, no había tenido un preescolar que la prepare. Ya sabe los colores y las letras, si no, no lo hubiera aprendido en casa. Me siento bien, a nosotros nos están dando mucha ayuda de cómo educarlos a ellos, en muchos aspectos.”



¿Qué los ayudaría a desempeñar sus roles de padres de la mejor manera posible?

Las madres describieron algunos apoyos para padres que ellas valoran, que incluyen más programas educativos para padres, clases para padres y clases de crianza en línea, más becas para que los niños realicen actividades extracurriculares (danza, música, deportes) y, especialmente, más horas de programas específicos a nivel cultural, como Aprendiendo Juntos, otro programa de Red Latina.

“Juntos al Kinder es un programa que empieza en el verano para los niños que empiezan en el kínder y que les dan mucha información que deben de saber antes de entrar al kínder, los guían y les enseñan de qué se tratan las conferencias [de padres].”

Se enfatizó la importancia de los proveedores y apoyos específicos desde el punto de vista lingüístico y cultural:

“En Head Start y ‘Juntos Aprendemos’ nos dan la opción de ser voluntarios en la clase y así nos podemos involucrar en la educación de los niños, para sentirse seguros. En este programa hay muchas familias que hablan español y así me siento más segura por el hecho que somos inmigrantes y hablamos el mismo idioma.”

Ayudar a apoyar a las familias que tienen niños con necesidades especiales

Dos madres relataron ejemplos de cómo los proveedores de programas de aprendizaje a temprana edad pueden desempeñar un rol importante ayudando a los padres a reconocer los desafíos que enfrentan sus hijos (uno autista, el otro para conseguir anteojos) y a obtener ayuda:

“Notaba que la niña que tenía en mi cuidado se caía muchísimo...Le informé a la mamá y finalmente ella la llevó al doctor, y la niña necesitaba lentes. Los padres no se habían dado cuenta porque andan trabajando mucho.”

“[tenía dos niños] y ellos se aislaban, mordían mucho también, no interactuaban con otros niños. [Yo] informé a la mamá lo que pasaba con el niño en su cuidado y la mamá no creía, hasta que lo llevó al doctor y le pudieron hacer un examen y confirmar que el niño era autista. Los niños fueron transferidos a una escuela especial. Los cuidadores de niños ayudan a los papás a darse cuenta de las necesidades que tienen los niños.”

Otra madre de un niño con necesidades especiales describió de qué manera la ayudó un programa ofrecido por Red Latina:

“Este programa...yo lo busque porque mi niño es un niño especial, es hiperactivo y en las escuelas por lo general no le dan mucha importancia, regularmente se la pasaba en el pasillo, porque el andaba en su mundo, son muchos niños para una sola maestra, y la maestra no puede enfocarse en un niño especial porque tiene que ayudar a los demás. Entonces mi niño estaba atrasadísimo en la escuela. Y yo estaba buscando ayudarlo a mi hijo, observé a mi niño en la clase cuando una profesora me dijo cómo estaba mi niño y me di cuenta que tenía que ayudar a mi hijo en la tarea y por eso este programa me ayudó mucho cómo ayudar a mi hijo. En la casa yo repasaba con mi hijo para que él se pueda nivelar en la escuela. Estos programas te apoyan mucho y te sientes que no estás sola y hay recursos para uno.”



Aportes clave

- ▶ Los programas específicos a nivel cultural y lingüístico se consideran valiosos tanto para los padres como para los niños porque ayudan a fortalecer la preparación para el kínder y preparan a los padres para comprender el sistema escolar y desarrollar un sistema de apoyo con otros padres y educadores de su cultura.
- ▶ Tener la oportunidad de conectarse con otros padres que hablan español y con proveedores hispanohablantes genera confianza y cultiva un sentimiento de seguridad en las familias.
- ▶ Los proveedores de aprendizaje a temprana edad pueden desempeñar un rol importante ayudando a los padres a identificar, comprender y buscar ayuda para los niños con necesidades especiales antes de que comiencen la escuela y proporcionando referencias.
- ▶ Un desafío considerable para estas madres fue la ausencia de cuidado infantil cerca de sus hogares y la necesidad de trasladar a sus hijos atravesando grandes distancias para que asistan a los programas ofrecidos por Head Start y/o Red Latina.
- ▶ En general, estas madres no percibían que los proveedores de cuidado infantil, incluso si eran hispanohablantes, proporcionarían actividades que apoyaran sus tradiciones y valores culturales, pero les gustaría que se integraran estas cosas en las experiencias de aprendizaje a temprana edad de sus hijos.

Entorno ideal de cuidado infantil

Las familias describieron que su entorno ideal de cuidado infantil está cerca de la casa de la familia y proporciona, principalmente, cuidado de día completo (de 9:00am a 2:00pm), aunque algunas necesitan jornadas más prolongadas (de 9:00am a 9:00pm; de 8:30am a 3:00pm). Las madres mencionaron la importancia de contar con un autobús para transporte, y una señaló que le gustaría que los padres tuvieran la opción de realizar trabajo voluntario en el lugar de cuidado infantil para reducir los costos. Como se mencionó anteriormente, para algunas familias, el trabajo como voluntario en el salón de clases también puede crear una mayor sensación de confianza en el proveedor del programa, y fortalecer la seguridad y a la comunidad. En cuanto a lo que consideraron más importante para ayudar a sus hijos a aprender y tener éxito, las madres nombraron diversas cosas, incluidas actividades creativas (bocetos, música, danza), deportes, habilidades sociales (buenos modales, responsabilidad personal, aprendizaje de rutinas y horarios) y habilidades académicas (leer y escribir tanto en inglés como en español, ciencias, cómo escribir su nombre, etc.).

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Hearing from Parents About Their Child Care Needs

Northwest Regional Early Learning Hub

In January of 2020, individual listening sessions were conducted with parents in Clatskanie and Scappoose, Oregon to learn about their experiences with, and needs for, child care in their community. The interview sessions were co-designed, planned and conducted by researchers at OSLC Developments, Inc., Portland State University, and the Early Learning Division. 11 parents contributed. Seven parents were interviewed by phone, two of the parents are from Scappoose and the rest are from Clatskanie. Four parents were interviewed in a focus group in Clatskanie (10 moms, 1 dad).

Finding Appropriate Care

What do they want in child care, how easy or difficult is it to find, what got in the way?

All of the parents that were interviewed mentioned how difficult it is to find child care in Clatskanie. There is a general lack of care options as well as certified and trained providers. Many parents who tried to find child care could not find it so, they ended up caring for their children themselves or found friends and family to look after their kids.

What kind of things did you look for when figuring out child care and or preschool arrangements?

Most of the parents interviewed reported that safety of the provider and the environment, and affordability were priorities. Getting to know the provider will increase parents' sense of safety and comfort. Two parents that have children experiencing disabilities mentioned they were looking for a provider who had experience and could specifically care for children with special needs. In particular, providers who are accredited so the state will help with the cost of care. One half of the parents mentioned that they were looking for care that was in a facility or center versus in home, private care and that they would prefer this location to be close to their home. One parent specifically said they were looking for transportation. Parents felt like having care in a center will increase the likelihood that providers will be certified, have training, and the environment will be safer.

What information did you have?

Most of the parents reported that word of mouth from family and friends, knowing and feeling comfortable with the provider, and facility was information that helped them make their decision. However, many of the parents also mentioned that the lack of registered or certified providers in the area, in particular for children with special needs, made child care prohibitive or parents were put on long waitlists. Cost versus income was also a factor for some parents. Due to the cost of care and because they preferred to raise their own children, they are choosing to stay home.

Where did you get the information?

Most parents got their information from Facebook, doing a search for care in their area or the providers websites. Parents specifically mentioned their Clatskanie community Facebook page, Facebook groups, schools and preschools, and the state licensing website for providers. Other parents mentioned word of mouth and knowing the provider personally.

What would you ideally want to know to make a good decision?

Most parents mentioned wanting to know the background of the provider including background checks and references. In addition, knowing and touring the environment their child was going to be in, as well as knowing they could go in any time and check on their kids. They wanted to understand things like safety, (e.g., no swimming pools and appropriate bathroom situations), what the children would be fed, how much outside time they would have, whether they used a curriculum, and how situations would be handled disciplinary wise.

What was most important to your final decision?

Safety and trustworthiness were important for all family's final decisions. Parents wanted to know that children were safe and comfortable. They also want to meet the providers and feel comfortable with the facility. One parent could not find trained and qualified providers, which lead her to care for her children herself.

Did you have to make compromises about what you were looking for?

Parents felt like they did need to make compromises for a variety of reasons, many of which were work related. Some parents mentioned they had to reduce the number of hours they worked, or rearrange their work schedule; one parent mentioned she did not work so she could care for her kids, while another had to turn down a job offer. One parent reported that her grandson's parents rearranged their visitation schedule to accommodate child care, and two mothers said they had to look for child care in another town due to lack of options in Clatskanie.



Equity and Inclusion

To what extent do you feel your provider created opportunities to highlight your child's family background, traditions, and culture? Have you ever felt that you or your child were disrespected or not valued by a child care provider because of your race, ethnicity, language, or other factors?

All families but two reported that they only spoke English in their homes. One family also spoke Japanese in their home and one family also spoke Spanish. None of the families felt their provider had ever disrespected them personally or their child, due to their race, ethnicity, language, or other factors. In response to the question about whether they felt their provider created opportunities to highlight their family background and traditions, parents either said it was not something that was ever done or thought of, nor was it relevant to their family, or that their provider recognized their child's birthday, Christmas, Thanksgiving, or their Christian religion as examples of family culture. One family mentioned their daughter's preschool was very open to inviting families to bring in books or cultural practices that made them comfortable.

Their Ideal Child Care Situation

Most parents mentioned that an ideal child care would be one that is centrally located in town, in a safe facility, with certified teachers possibly in one of their schools. One person mentioned specifically a facility—such as the Head Start preschool with cameras and enough people supervising the children. Another parent mentioned she would like a parent co-op, where you sign up for different times, and families would go together and volunteer to watch each other's kids. Only one parent mentioned their ideal location would be in someone's home.

What would your child learn at this ideal arrangement?

All of the parents mentioned that social interaction, how to get along with other kids and adults, was their main priority. Parents also mentioned safety and the importance of good routines. Other things they would learn included: basic early learning skills such as manners, independence, shapes, colors, numbers, letters, playing with others, and arts and crafts.

One parent commented **"I don't expect them to be learning that's an actual preschool I just want them to be safe."**

And another parent chimed in **"I think we've experienced...had such a drought in daycare I think we are so starved for someone we can trust to watch our kid to get us through the day...is so high priority at this point, we haven't even thought about the rest of it for so long, 'til they get to preschool age..."**

How would your child get there?

All parents said they would self-transport their children. A few of the parents mentioned that they would utilize transportation if it was provided.

What times of the day or days of the week would your child or children be there?

A few parents wanted a few days a week for 2 to 3 hours at a time but many parents mentioned all daycare. One helpful comment a mother made was that one of the largest industry's in Clatskanie is the mill so, many families start work as early as 6:30am. She mentioned that 6:30am to 7:00pm would be ideal for her family. Many families agreed daycare starting at 7:00am Monday through Friday would be ideal, with ending times ranging from midafternoon to as late as 7:00pm.



Families with Children with Special Needs

Have you had any difficulties finding care for your children experiencing disability?

Four parents reported children with special needs, mostly speech. Parents reported that getting child care where the providers understand and have experience or are trained and certified to work with children with special needs is difficult to find in Clatskanie. A couple of parents mentioned that finding care for a child three years or older who is not potty trained is also difficult. Two parents said that they found out about a provider through their medical professional, one being their child's physical therapist and one their child's psychologist. One parent specifically talked about not being able to find a provider who is certified or trained to work with children with special needs so, her sister is going through the process to get state certified. This has been a barrier to care; the process is time consuming and her sister is dropping her hours at work in order to do this. Those who did find a good provider feel that their child's needs were being met in a way that was sensitive and supportive.

Have you ever chosen not to work because child care was too expensive?

All of the parents except for one mom said that they have chosen not to work at some point because of the expense of child care. However, the mom shared that if she did not have her grandmother to help with child care, one of the parents would not be able to work. Three of the parents explained having to weigh the cost of child care with how much they make to ensure they are paying for the cost of child care and still bringing money home. One mom said *"we sat down and literally went through dollars and cents...We figured out how much time can we allow that's just chill TV, toys, playtime at someone else's house, versus ok we need to work...We figured out if I take time off it makes more sense than if my son who makes 5 times as much as I do. And if there's a sick day, we're like, who makes the least amount of money in the situation and can take the hit?"* Three parents explained weighing the costs of child care with how much they are making, and spending time with their kids. One mom stated *"it wasn't worth it to miss out on my child's growing up for a few hundred dollars after paying out."*

Current Child Care Experiences and Building School Readiness

How important is it that your child care provider help you and your child to be more ready to start kindergarten?

Most of the parents agreed that kindergarten readiness was important but certain factors were particularly important. Four of the parents said it was particularly important to them that their child care providers focus on social skills. One of these four parents shared that playing and learning while playing was important to them. Three of the parents interviewed said it was particularly important for their children to learn basic school skills such as; getting used to a longer day, being able to sit for long periods, knowing the routine of school environment, riding the bus, knowing basic classroom expectations, and having experience with school structure. Two of these three parents shared it was also important for their children to learn how to respect adults. One of the parents shared that *"to have a daycare facility where they can learn, that would be huge in the transition to kindergarten."* Two of the parents interviewed felt that kindergarten readiness would come with preschool and that it was more important to have safe providers, and also just the fact that they are getting child care, because there's such a *"desperate situation for child care"* in Clatskanie.

What does your provider do to help with school readiness, including social skills?

Four parents shared information about how the provider supports children with social skills through, playtime, interaction with other kids, teaching them how to get along, and learning to share space and materials. One of these parent's shared that her daughter's preschool uses the Second Step curriculum to help guide children through conflicts and solving social problems. One mom shared that her provider does a lot of activities, arts and crafts, sensory things, ABC's, numbers, and learning about listening and following directions. One mom shared that her provider does not do anything focused on social or other skills, she just watches her child. One mom shared that her private providers did not have the training to help their child with social or other school skills.

What does your provider talk to you about in terms of things you can do to help your child be ready to start school?

For four of the parents interviewed, this question did not apply because they are child care providers themselves. For one of the parents, their provider has good communication about what is going on in the classroom. The provider has a class website, provides newsletters, emails, and gives worksheets to take home with things they are working on in class (e.g., finding upper- and lower-case letters). One parent's provider talks with her about being consistent with attendance and how to do things he does at school at home. One parent's provider talks to them about their experience with kids they have who are already in kindergarten. For one of the parent's, their provider has not said anything about what they can do to help them be ready to start school.

What gets in the way of being able to be the best parent you can be?

Four of the parents felt that not having enough time to spend with their child got in the way. All of these four parents listed work as getting in the way of them being able to spend time with their child. One of these four parents also mentioned her commitments and the children's activities getting in the way of spending time with her children. Three of the parents mentioned feeling drained or exhausted as getting in the way, one of these parents is a caregiver for multiple children with special needs. One parent shared that not having a larger income gets in the way because it doesn't allow for her child to have as many opportunities. One parent shared that the stress of not having quality daycare gets in the way because "you don't have the daily reminder your kids are in a safe structured spot."

What would help you to feel you were doing the best you could?

Four of the parents mentioned that having quality child care providers would help them feel they were doing the best they could as a parent. These parents particularly mentioned providers who are safe, trust worthy, the best care possible, trained, and focused on learning as being helpful. One of these parents mentioned quality child care would be helpful because it would allow her to get a break from the 24/7 care she provides to her children with special needs and would give her time for all the paperwork, transporting to OHSU, and appointments she has to do because her children have special needs. Two of the parents mentioned having support from family. One parent interviewed mentioned access to local educational parenting resources. One parent mentioned, just in general, feeling like she could meet all of her children's needs. Another parent shared that being a voice for her son with special needs would help her feel she was doing the best she could as a parent.

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Family Listening Session

Hearing from Parents About Their Child Care Needs

OCDC Chiloquin

In January, 2020, a listening session with parents and caregivers was held at the Oregon Child Development Coalition (OCDC) Chiloquin site. This listening session was part of a series of family listening sessions funded by the Preschool Development Grant. The listening session was co-designed and organized by OCDC and AB Cultural Drivers in partnership with OSLC Developments, Inc. and Portland State University. The goal of the listening session was to hear family voices from local tribal members and other communities that have not yet been heard in the conversation of early learning needs and experiences. The listening session was held in English with six parents and caregivers, which included three mothers of young children, one father, one grandmother, and one uncle. In addition, the director of the OCDC Chiloquin site and a home visitor were also present during the listening session.

Current Child Care Experiences and Building School Readiness

Who takes care of your young children ages 0-5 years?

Three families had young children who were enrolled in the OCDC classroom, one of which attended the tribal day care as well. In addition to OCDC, parents had the support of their families to look after their children. However, making child care work was challenging for these families (see below).

Opportunities to Celebrate and Practice Your Family's Traditions, Culture, and Language

One family recommended that the OCDC classroom offer lessons in the Klamath language. The other families in the listening session agreed that this would be a beneficial practice, along with the inclusion of native educational content and healthy foods.

"Klamath has been a real effort, a concerted effort for us. My sister, their mom, has done it [Klamath language] as well since they were born. In the last two years, our speaking community has grown. We've been able to include and do [Klamath language]. We had a session where we came and taught songs, numbers, colors, and animals. I think that was through the tribal daycare program. Me and one of our linguists so it's been an effort the last year more so than previous years and so hoping that momentum really continues on with the youth."

"They [the children] have larger vocabularies at times than I do. So I can ask them what animals are and they can tell me. That's been really cool, that interplay has been trading language with them. So if that could continue and if we could get trainings for staff that would be amazing to keep that momentum going on with the youth."

"If there were some stories about creation, some basic stories that we could teach our youth. I worked on a research project before and one of the things that we did for another tribe was we recorded five of their stories for the head start program and they started implementing those stories and the tribe felt like those were the important stories...so we hired a producer and we did these stories on the reservation. Then we made them into CDs, the head start teachers implemented those in the class. I really think that's important because when our children know who they are and where they come from that gives them a solid foundation to grow from."

"First food would be really great as well. Connections, we try to do a lot of first foods in our house...For the other two kids and the rest of our tribal children if there was some kind of availability for them to practice first food traditions here [OCDC], that would be amazing. But that would be like magic wand kind of thing. I've never heard that they eat bad here but getting them on deer, elk, salmon, those are superfoods that we have available to us and that would be great for our children to be on. For it to be natural to them...One benefit is connection to the land, we're here and we've subsisted off of traditional diets for a long time. That's a part of celebrating our identity and our longevity. Almost all of our kids eat sugary diets today and there's very few affordable places for us to get quality food in Klamath Falls. It's weird because we are a ranching, farming community. For us to get cheap organic foods, I'll drive to Eugene, I'll drive to Ashland to get groceries because Sherms is okay and we just opened Natural Grocers, which is amazing but it's taken this long and it's still expensive."

This family also reflected on their positive experience in the elementary school and their desire to see this in the new OCDC building.

"Currently our elementary is culturally sensitive. It's a welcoming environment when you walk in the door at the elementary it looks like there's natives at the school. You know, the way it looks, the way it appears. I think that that's helpful. It would be helpful here too if we had some more of our language and animals and colors and the numbers to help our children be able to relate to that."

Benefits of Early Learning

Parents and caregivers mentioned multiple benefits of their children participating in an early learning program. This included, learning how to listen to teachers, developing social skills by being around children other than their siblings, learning a routine, academic stimuli, and helping children be ready for school.

"For my nephew the introduction to more learning time and less play time was rough but at the same time, healthy."

"We really want that, we want our kids to be ready. It's hard enough in the school systems we really need to figure out how to help our kids to be ready for that."

Parents noticed that their children had gained social-emotional skills since attending preschool like being more outgoing and learning to share. One family's child had only been attending the program for a couple of weeks so they had not yet seen the benefits that other families have seen in their young ones who were in their second year of preschool. The home visitor told the family that she has noticed their child has the routine down and that he interacts with the other children in the classroom.

Challenges and Obstacles

Finding affordable care and managing child care arrangements was challenging for these families, for a variety of reasons. Even those who participated in the OCDC program described challenges due to families' busy schedules and the logistics of coordinating pick up, drop off, and coverage of care if things came up like doctor's appointments. In addition, some family members live up to an hour or more away so parents have to travel long distances on often treacherous roads in order to get care for their young ones.

"I work full time and their dad works seasonal so right now they stay home with dad when they're not at school. When he goes back to work, I have no idea what I'm going to do with them. And I'll have three, I have another one on the way. I might have to stay home with the kids because I don't have child care. I've tried three years to get him into daycare here and there's a waiting list and at the time I was working night shift so it didn't even help out. So now I'm working in the mornings and I've been trying to get him in daycare, still."

"When he [child's father] was in Eugene we'd tell him something's up so he would come down here to cover what's necessary. Because we don't have reliable child care here. We don't have anybody we can trust. I think that's real."

All families mentioned that there is a lack of child care in Chiloquin that they would trust to leave their young ones.

"It's hard to trust someone that you don't know super personally. I don't think I could just drop my kids off at somebody's house. Even if they are through DHS or whatever."

As mentioned previously, one parent has not been able to find child care for their young children due to being over income for the OCDC classroom and a lack of trusting child care options in Chiloquin, which other parents echoed. This family had to have one of the parents stop working in order to provide care for their young ones. Other parents also shared that due to high costs of child care it was cheaper and preferable for them to stay home with their young children.

"For some of the daycares in town [Klamath Falls] if we had both kids in care it would almost be \$1000 a month so it'd be pointless for me to work if I'm going to be paying for daycare because I'd be working to pay for daycare. So I'd rather stay home with my kids if I'm going to be paying that much. \$200 a month would be reasonable. It'd be very hard for me to go to work and have someone else taking care of my kids all day and I'm not raising them...just to have them go to daycare so it'd have to be pretty cheap because it's hard to go to work just to pay for that."



All families said that there are no local activities or opportunities for early learning experiences for when there is no school.

"The park isn't really safe to take the kids to. It's not like they can go hang out in the park like in Eugene or other places you can take your kids to the park. You don't really want to do that, it's not really a safe place to be. You find stuff in the park that shouldn't be there. There's behaviors in the park that shouldn't, little kids shouldn't have to see."

Even though the tribal day care and the OCDC classroom are in the same building, families who need to get children to different classrooms to cover the need for full day care reported challenges managing these arrangements.



Key Takeaways

- ▶ Families in Chiloquin have a trustworthy and quality child care program through OCDC, however, not all families get to benefit from their services and families need extended hours—7:00am to 6:00pm, ideally.
- ▶ Families would like Klamath language, stories, and first foods integrated into their children's early care experiences and environment.
- ▶ Most families have seen the development of academic and social-emotional skills in their children attending the OCDC classroom.
- ▶ Chiloquin needs safe and clean spaces to play and additional educational services for their young ones when school is out.
- ▶ There is clearly a challenge in having access to close, affordable, trusted child care that meets the needs of these busy working families.

What would your ideal child care situation look like?

All parents said that they would ideally have child care in the new OCDC building where some of their children were already attending a half-day program. Full daycare was a clear priority, with parents saying it would be better if the program went from 7:00am to 5:30-6:00pm or at least 3:00pm with the option of an after school program. It would also be ideal if this program was year around, including school breaks, rather than just seasonal.

"It's amazing right now that he can transition in the same building from tribal day care to OCDC but just a full day of OCDC would be preferable."

"That's huge here in Chiloquin, because there's nothing for our youth to do. Like on spring break and summer time, our kids don't have anything. If you live right in Chiloquin it's really hard and I'm sure living outside of Chiloquin is hard too. Like there's no program to take your kid or have somebody take your kid to the library, you know like when you're in a city. You can hire somebody to take your kid to the library for story time and have a full day of stuff. We don't have those options here."

Ideally having the option of bus transportation or early drop off would be parents preferred way of having their child arrive to school.

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Family Listening Session

Hearing from Parents About Their Child Care Needs

OCDC Madras

In January 2020, a listening session with parents and caregivers was held at the Oregon Child Development Coalition (OCDC) Madras site. This listening session was part of a series of family listening sessions funded by the Preschool Development Grant as part of a statewide early learning needs assessment. The listening session was co-designed and organized by OCDC and AB Cultural Drivers in partnership with OSLC Developments, Inc. and Portland State University. The goal of the listening session was to hear family voices that have not yet been captured in the conversation of early learning needs and experiences. The listening session was held in Spanish with 10 parents and caregivers, which included 8 mothers and 2 fathers. In addition, the OCDC Lead Family Services and Health Specialist and a home visitor were also present during the listening session.

Early Learning Experiences

All parents in the listening session had children in an OCDC classroom, in addition to OCDC parents had family members or another center-based care to fill in for parents who needed care outside of the half-day OCDC classroom. Parents said that OCDC has helped their children be comfortable with other children, follow rules and a routine, refine their fine motor skills, learn language and vocabulary, and to be more comfortable in a school environment and become more independent.

"Before OCDC he was closed down, one of the teachers helped my child a lot. She provided an area for my child with toys that he could share with his friends and he understood that and that really helped."

Una de sus maestras... Ella le ayudó, le dijo 'ésta es tu área de juguetes', para ayudarlo cuando no quería quedarse en la escuela...ella le explicó' es tu área pero vas a compartir' y él entendió que era para que él se adaptara y se sintiera cómodo."



Their Ideal Child Care

Ideally, parents would prefer that OCDC could cover all of their child care needs for a full day of care from 7:30am. to 5:00pm. Additional child care needs included during evening college classes, when OCDC closes due to weather or training days. Parents would prefer bus transportation for their young ones to arrive at school. In addition to the learning children are already experiencing at OCDC, parents would like more physical activities like skateboarding, rock climbing, an outdoor jungle gym, sports like soccer, T-ball, basketball, dancing, swimming—as well as other outdoor activities like gardening and composting.

“They formed relationship with the teachers, they show that they’re not only teachers it feels like they’re a second mom because they take responsibility. You can tell when the children come to school they are happy and trust since they’ve built that relationship.”

“Forman la relación con sus maestras, con sus educadores, agarran esa confianza porque las maestras les muestran...que básicamente son sus madres...ahí se nota cuando los niños vienen a la escuela contentos es porque se sienten protegidos por el maestro, forman esa relación.”

In addition, a couple parents commented that they have good communication with their child’s teacher.

“She would tell me her schedule of activities with the child and on the weekends, I would keep the same routine so that would help my child. I would support what they were doing at school and do the same routine at home so that the child wouldn’t be confused. There was always good communication. I would tell the teacher what I wasn’t doing at home so that they wouldn’t do that at school.”

“Ella diciéndome su schedule y lo continuaba los fines de semana para que estuviéramos en la misma página...nosotros hablamos mucho con la maestra. Yo le hago support her para que sea lo mismo y no esté confundido el niño...mantenemos la comunicación...”

“The teachers always say hello to my children and are attentive. They would let the parents know what type of day they had, what they ate, how she slept. The team that they have is really good.”

“...Voy llegando con mi hija y todos: ‘hola! hola!’, son bien attentive y cuando llegamos a recogerlos la maestra nos deja saber sobre su día...si comió mucho o durmió mucho...las maestras y el equipo que tienen aquí está bueno.”

Opportunities to Celebrate and Practice Your Family’s Traditions, Culture, and Language

Last year OCDC held an event *All Around the World* for all their children and families. Each classroom was a different county and had different activities. One parent said, “...my children liked it a lot.” In addition, parents said that the OCDC teachers speak Spanish and English, they play music in English and Spanish, the food provided is from different cultures, and each classroom is decorated with different cultural pictures.

Support for Transitioning to Kindergarten

Parents said that OCDC helps to support their children to transition into kindergarten by teaching them to recognize their name, spelling their name, supporting early mathematics, conducting developmental assessments and connecting the family and child to health or special education services or other supports that may be needed. In addition, OCDC has supported parents in preparing for kindergarten by helping a parent to fill out the application for kindergarten.

Key Takeaways

- ▶ Parents and children at OCDC Madras have a trusting and supportive relationship with the teachers and staff.
- ▶ Parents have noticed the learning and socio-emotional development of their children from participating in OCDC.
- ▶ Parents felt that the OCDC Madras program supports their family's culture, language, and traditions.
- ▶ Parents mentioned several ways that OCDC Madras has supported their family through service referral and providing a welcoming, caring environment.
- ▶ Ideally, parents would like OCDC to provide full day services, bus transportation, and connect families with affordable, trusting child care services for when OCDC is closed.



Support for Parents and Caregivers

Parents also spoke about the support they've received by OCDC outside of early learning and care, which included resources for NeighborImpact, 211, the food bank, and addiction services. One parent said that the staff at OCDC provide services and referrals without judgement that **"There's a positivity of the staff here."** One family experienced a tragedy where they lost their home and said that, **"everyone [parents and staff] at OCDC helped and donated things. They were like family. They always help, and if they can't, they try to help...It was a community that helped us a lot."**

"I really trust this facility because they help you grow as a parent."

Challenges and Barriers

One parent commented that quality child care is expensive and "If they don't have a license it's cheaper but not as safe." A couple of other parents also mentioned past negative experiences with informal care and the lack of trust they feel for inexpensive child care options in their area. Two families have to work opposite shifts as their partner in order to cover child care.

"It's exhausting, I would get home and then she would take off. Even when she first started graveyards, it was hard because I missed her. It stressed out our relationship, we fought a lot."

Parents would like to spend more time with their young ones and have more support in supporting their young ones during difficult times.

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Opiniones de padres sobre el cuidado infantil

OCDC Madras

En enero de 2020, se llevó a cabo una jornada de conversación comunitaria con padres y cuidadores en el centro de Madras de la Coalición de Desarrollo Infantil de Oregon (OCDC, por sus siglas en inglés). Esta jornada formó parte de una serie de jornadas con familias que se llevaron a cabo con fondos provenientes de la Subvención para el Desarrollo de la Educación Preescolar en el marco de una evaluación de las necesidades de aprendizaje temprano en todo el estado. La jornada de conversación fue codiseñada y organizada por la OCDC y AB Cultural Drivers, en asociación con el Centro de Aprendizaje Social de Oregon y la Universidad Estatal de Portland. El objetivo de las jornadas era escuchar las opiniones de familias que aún no estaban incluidas en las conversaciones sobre las necesidades y las experiencias de aprendizaje temprano de las familias. La jornada de conversación comunitaria se llevó a cabo en español y contó con la participación de 10 padres y cuidadores, ocho madres y dos padres. Además, también estuvieron presentes durante la jornada de conversación el especialista en salud y servicios familiares líderes de la OCDC y un visitante domiciliario.

Experiencias de aprendizaje a temprana edad

Todos los padres que participaron de la jornada de conversación tienen hijos en un salón de clases de la OCDC; además de la OCDC, los padres cuentan con familiares u otro tipo de atención en un centro que ayuda a los padres que necesitan cuidado infantil fuera del salón de clases de la OCDC de medio día. Los padres dijeron que la OCDC ha ayudado a sus hijos a sentirse más cómodos con otros niños, a seguir reglas y una rutina, a perfeccionar sus habilidades de motricidad fina, a aprender el idioma y el vocabulario, y a sentirse más a gusto en un entorno escolar y volverse más independientes.

"Una de sus maestras...Ella le ayudó, le dijo 'ésta es tu área de juguetes,' para ayudarle cuando no quería quedarse en la escuela...ella le explicó 'es tu área pero vas a compartir' y él entendió que era para que él se adaptara y se sintiera cómodo."



Servicios ideales de cuidado infantil

Idealmente, los padres prefieren que la OCDC cubra todas sus necesidades de cuidado infantil durante todo el día, de 7:30 a.m. a 5:00 p.m. Otras necesidades de cuidado infantil incluyeron el cuidado durante las clases universitarias nocturnas, cuando la OCDC cierra por cuestiones climáticas o jornadas de capacitación. Los padres prefieren que sus hijos pequeños vayan a la escuela en autobús. Además del aprendizaje que los niños ya están recibiendo en la OCDC, a los padres les gustaría que realizaran más actividades físicas, como andar en patineta, escalar, jugar en pasamanos al aire libre y hacer deportes como fútbol, tee-ball, baloncesto, danza y natación. Y otras actividades al aire libre, como jardinería y compostaje.

“Forman la relación con sus maestras, con sus educadores, agarran esa confianza porque las maestras les muestran...que básicamente son sus madres...ahí se nota cuando los niños vienen a la escuela contentos es porque se sienten protegidos por el maestro, forman esa relación.”

Asimismo, un par de padres comentó que tienen buena comunicación con la maestra de sus hijos.

“Ella diciéndome su schedule y lo continuaba los fines de semana para que estuviéramos en la misma página...nosotros hablamos mucho con la maestra. Yo la apoyo para que sea lo mismo y no esté confundido el niño...mantenemos la comunicación...”

“...Voy llegando con mi hija y todos: ‘¡hola! ¡hola!’, son bien attentive y cuando llegamos a recogerlos la maestra nos deja saber sobre su día...si comió mucho o durmió mucho...las maestras y el equipo que tienen aquí está bueno.”

Oportunidades para celebrar y practicar las tradiciones, la cultura y el idioma de su familia

El año pasado, la OCDC realizó un evento denominado *Alrededor del Mundo* para todos sus niños y familias. Cada salón de clases tenía un país diferente y actividades distintas. Un padre dijo: “...a mis hijos les gustó mucho.” Además, los padres comentaron que las maestras de la OCDC hablan en español y en inglés, tocan música en español y en inglés, la comida proporcionada es de diferentes culturas y cada salón de clases está decorado con imágenes culturales diferentes.

Apoyo para la transición al kínder

Los padres dijeron que la OCDC ayuda a apoyar a sus hijos en la transición al kínder enseñándoles a reconocer y deletrear sus nombres, ofreciéndoles apoyo en matemáticas iniciales, realizando evaluaciones del desarrollo y conectando a la familia y al niño con los servicios de salud o educación especial, u otros apoyos, que puedan ser necesarios. Además, la OCDC ha apoyado a los padres en la preparación para el kínder ayudándolos a llenar las solicitudes para el kínder.

Apoyo para padres y cuidadores

Los padres también hablaron acerca del apoyo que han recibido por parte de la OCDC fuera del aprendizaje a temprana edad y el cuidado infantil, lo que incluye recursos para NeighborImpact, 211, el banco de alimentos y los servicios de adicción. Un padre dijo que el personal de la OCDC proporciona servicios y referencias sin juzgar que **“Hay algo positivo en este personal.”** Una familia sufrió una tragedia en la que perdieron su casa y dijeron: **“todos [los padres y el personal] de la OCDC ayudaron y donaron cosas. Fueron como una familia. Siempre ayudan, y si no pueden, intentan hacerlo...Fue una comunidad que nos ayudó mucho.”**

“Confío realmente en este centro porque te ayudan a crecer como padre.”

Aportes clave

- ▶ Los padres y niños de la OCDC Madras tienen una relación de confianza y apoyo con las maestras y el personal.
- ▶ Los padres han notado el aprendizaje y el desarrollo socioemocional de sus hijos a partir de su participación en la OCDC.
- ▶ Los padres consideran que el programa de la OCDC Madras apoya la cultura, el idioma y las tradiciones de sus familias.
- ▶ Los padres han mencionado varias maneras en que la OCDC Madras ha apoyado a sus familias a través de referencias a servicios y proporcionándoles un entorno acogedor y cuidadoso.
- ▶ Según los padres, lo ideal sería que la OCDC proporcione servicios de día completo y transporte en autobús, y que conecte a las familias con servicios de cuidado infantil asequibles y confiables para los momentos en que la OCDC está cerrada.



Desafíos y barreras

Un padre comentó que el cuidado infantil de calidad es costoso y “si no tienen una licencia, es más barato, pero no tan seguro.” Un par de padres también mencionó experiencias negativas en el pasado con el cuidado informal y la falta de confianza que sienten ante las opciones de cuidado infantil asequibles en su área. Dos familias tienen que trabajar a contraturno con su pareja para poder cubrir la atención infantil.


“Es agotador; yo llego a casa y ella se va. Incluso cuando ella comenzó el turno de noche, fue difícil porque la extrañaba. Afectó la relación, peleábamos mucho.”

A los padres les gustaría pasar más tiempo con sus pequeños y tener más apoyo para ayudar a sus hijos durante los momentos difíciles.

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Family Listening Session

Hearing from Parents About Their Child Care Needs

OCDC Gresham

In January 2020, a listening session with parents was held in Gresham, Oregon to learn about their needs for, and experiences with, child care in their community. This listening session was part of a series of family listening sessions funded by the Preschool Development Grant as a part of a statewide early learning needs assessment. The goal of the listening sessions was to hear family voices that have not yet been captured in understanding families' early learning needs and experiences. This session was co-designed, planned and hosted by Oregon Child Development Coalition (OCDC) and by researchers from AB Cultural Drivers, OSLC Developments, Inc., and Portland State University. Eight mothers and three fathers currently living in Gresham attended the session. Eight of the parents came to Oregon from Mexico, and four of these parents specified that they were from Oaxaca. The remaining three parents were born in Texas, Arizona, and California. Two mothers self-identified as American Indian. The listening session was primarily conducted in Spanish, with English translation available for the two participants who did not speak Spanish.

Current Child Care Experiences and Building School Readiness

Who currently takes care of your children ages 0-5 years and what activities do they do?

All parents in the listening session had children currently attending, or soon to be attending, care at OCDC. In addition to this care, four parents shared that they relied on family members and friends for child care support. One mother described trading care with other families with small children and relying on teen babysitters. One parenting pair reported that the mother managed all of the child care before their child attended OCDC. This parenting pair did not rely on babysitters, friends, or family for care.



If you had a magic wand, what would help you be the best mom or dad you can be?

These parents talked about the value of time, patience, and curiosity. They expressed the desire to spend more time with their children, including one who said she wished she did not have to work.

Many parents agreed that, while with friends and family, their children spend time watching TV or a tablet. In more formal care settings, the parents described that their children play with other children (e.g., play tag, sing, dance), practice social skills, and learn to read and write. Multiple parents emphasized that their children have learned to make friends in care settings. One mother said, “Daycare is where you learn how not to be a jerk.” These parents shared that their children are learning social-emotional skills, like recognizing emotions and empathy for others, at OCDC.

Many parents described the cultural and linguistic supports that exist at OCDC. The teachers serve Latin/Mexican food, there is native art throughout the classroom, and the classrooms are bilingual in Spanish and English. One mother shared why having bilingual classrooms is important:

“Sometimes when you have a language barrier, and you start in a school, when they don’t talk to you in your language that can be somewhat intimidating... When my father in law came to pick up the child, he was excited because they speak Spanish here. Those little things that are not big, but they have an impact in our community.”

“A veces cuando entras a una escuela donde no te hablan en tu idioma a veces se siente intimidante. Y hay situaciones, por ejemplo, cuando mi suegro vino por mi niño, él dice ‘wow hablan español’. Son cosas chiquitas pero tienen impacto en nuestra comunidad.”

Later, this mother described that her son, who speaks Spanish, is helping another child at OCDC learn to speak Spanish. This other child is helping her son learn new words in English. “It is an exchange of words.”

“En vez de decir ‘good’, él dice ‘excelente’. O cosas que han resaltado. ‘Mi amigo me enseñó’. Es un intercambio de palabras.”

One parenting pair mentioned that OCDC cannot fully celebrate their culture, because OCDC cannot celebrate religious events. Some parents mentioned sending their children to Mexico, where they can absorb Mexican culture (including religious events) and language. A few parents shared that it is important for their children to be exposed to other cultures so they can learn to understand others:

A father said, “Every state in Mexico has different cultures, so I like it when he participates in different cultures, along with the one he’s going to grow up with.”

“Cada estado tiene diferentes culturas y me gusta que él participe con diferentes culturas igual con la cultura que a lo mejor ellos van a crecer, ya que ellos son estadounidenses, me gustaría que practique todas las culturas que pueda, para que así pueda entender a cada una de las personas, ya que no todos somos de la misma cultura.”

Another father said, “I feel that I would like him to learn all those cultures so he could understand other people the same way he understands his friends.”

“Yo siento que me gustaría que aprendiera todas esas culturas para que pudiera entender a la demás gente como a sus amigos.”



Early Learning Programs Helped Identify Children with Special Needs

One mother was thankful to OCDC for their help in identifying her child's Autism.

"When I started bringing [my son] here is when we realized that he had autism. And that's something if I had not brought him here I wouldn't have found out. They told me where I needed to go. They said that now he was talking much more than before. Before he didn't talk at all. Last year and this year he has been [at OCDC], and he has learned a lot."

"Cuando empecé a traerlo aquí es cuando nos dimos cuenta que tenía autismo y es algo que yo pienso que si no lo hubiera traído aquí no lo hubiera sabido. Me dijeron dónde tenía que ir. Ya habla mucho más que antes, antes no hablaba nada. ya tiene el año pasado y este año que tiene aquí, ha aprendido mucho."

Their Ideal Child Care Situation

What time or days of the week would you like your child to be in care?

As might be expected, different families had different needs: One mother, jokingly, said 24/7. Five parents said full day care, from 7:30 or 8:00am to 4:00 or 5:00pm, 4 or 5 days a week would be ideal for them. However, one father shared that he felt that that would be hard on the children: "If they were here all afternoon, it would be the same as us working all day."

"Si estuvieran toda la tarde sería lo mismo que cuando uno está trabajando y no los ve aunque estén en la casa."

Other parents said the current OCDC half-day schedule, 9:00am to 12:30pm, works well for their needs, though a couple parents said that a small extension would be helpful. One mother said that 12:30pm is sometimes a challenging pickup time to manage with her work schedule: "I don't even eat because I have to go and pick him up." One mother suggested an evening of care at OCDC, once a month, would be a special opportunity for parents to go out. Other parents agreed with this idea. The parents in this session were aware that a care situation that works well for them may not be ideal for other parents with different needs.

What kinds of educational, artistic, and other activities would you like your children to receive to help them prepare for kindergarten?

One mother shared her dream of mixed age groups starting at birth in early learning programs:

"I would love to see a multicultural, multigenerational, multiage setting. The way we set up school, it's the 1 year olds, 2 year olds...all the way until they're 18...That's actually not normal for a functioning society, we only do that because it's easy. Little kids could benefit [from] being in a classroom setting...with older kids. The older kids could then be supported by adults. Then everybody could learn from having some elders in the room. Everyone could share the load of raising up the babies...We are not saying, okay now, one teacher needs to teach all the grades...but everybody is helping."

Parents also described enrichment activities they would like to see added to their child's childcare experiences, such as music, cooking, construction, recycling, nature studies, life skills, and exposure to different careers. Two parents wanted their children to learn self-care techniques, such as how to calm themselves when overwhelmed using meditation or yoga.

Finding Appropriate Care

Many parents relied on references from friends, family, and coworkers to find care. One parent said that they found OCDC through a flyer. The father said that he wished OCDC advertised more, with more flyers in more places, or perhaps on some Spanish music radio stations. A mother shared that many years ago, it was more challenging to find care, and also described her use of social media to find care:

"20 years ago when I had to find daycare...Facebook didn't exist. MySpace didn't exist. So I would ask at their school, 'who's the babysitter in the neighborhood?'...Somebody referred me to her...but my oldest son's personality and her didn't get along. She called me at work and said when you pick up your kid this is your last day. I had work, I had classes, so I got some people to cover my shifts for two days, but I needed to find somebody. So I went to Craigslist...I didn't have time to really get to know [them]...I had to get to work."

She described other piecemeal solutions, including asking another parent who had a child in her son's kindergarten class for afternoon care, saying **"I had to really patch it together for many years. It was difficult."** Now, she uses Facebook parenting groups as a resource to find care quickly.

Two parents emphasized the difficulty of finding trusted caregivers:

"It's difficult, especially when you don't know the person, and you give that person the most valuable [piece of your life]. It was difficult to trust somebody...At some point I even thought that I didn't need to work, why am I going to leave my children? Then I found out that [my child was] fine, [the babysitter] had experience, we checked the criminal record, she's only two blocks away from my work...Now my youngest child, I go to get him and he doesn't want to leave, and I think that's good."

"Es difícil más cuando no conoces a la persona y darle como lo más valioso que tengas a esa persona, sin saber lo que en realidad está pasando debajo de su techo, fue un proceso difícil...Fue hasta momentos donde pensé que no necesitaba trabajar, me estresaba hasta que procesaba que ellos están bien, ellos tienen experiencia, tienen criminal record, está a dos cuadras de mi trabajo... hasta la fecha mi niño más chiquito voy por él y no se quiere venir, entonces creo que es algo bueno."

"The woman that took care of my children, it was the ex wife of my father. She took care of the children, but she didn't have the patience...I didn't know what would happen if I was not there...I thought I better take them to someone who will take care of the children and have the patience to take care of children."

"Es la ex esposa de mi papá cuidaba a mis niñas, pero ni siquiera tiene la paciencia de cuidar...porque ahora sí estoy aquí, y si no estoy, no sé lo que va a pasar...pero dije 'mejor la llevo a una señora que tenga paciencia.'"

Have you ever had to leave work to take care of your children because paying to care for them is too expensive?

Cost was clearly a challenge. Three mothers talked about their hardship with balancing the expense of caring for their children with going to work. Two had to leave work because the cost of childcare was not affordable for them.

"I had to leave work...I was basically just working to pay the babysitter. I didn't keep any money."

"Tuve que dejar, iba prácticamente a trabajar para la babysitter [...] y pues yo no me quedaba con nada."

"I would like to work, but I cannot apply for public care [for my youngest child], and I cannot pay for the \$1200 a month for the youngest to go to care. During those three hours I could work part time or do something productive. Since staying home, I have had anxiety and depression, but \$1200 is way too much."

"A mí me gustaría trabajar y no pude aplicar al childcare porque son \$1200 al mes por el más chiquito. (Durante esas tres horas yo pudiera agarrar un part time o hacer algo productivo.) Porque desde que empecé a estar en casa me dió lo que es ansiedad y depresión, todo se junta. Pero \$1200 es mucho dinero."

"When I had Employment-Related Day Care [ERDC], you know, the state would help pay for some of my daycare, I had to be very careful about my income. If I went over the income requirement, all of the daycare would be on me... If you want to get a better job, or a raise, or more hours, you can't just make a little more money, you better make a lot more money to cover losing the daycare [support]."

Their Needs as Parents

What do you need to help support your children as they enter kindergarten?

Parents talked about the importance of staying involved and invested in their children's education.

"We are the first teachers and we don't have to give the whole load to the teachers, so we're trying to involve ourselves more..."

"...Somos los primeros maestros, y no darle la carga a los maestros de que ellos le tienen que enseñar, o nomás porque son los maestros, entonces [nosotros nos] involucramos más en tareas..."

One father is dedicated to going to parent meetings and asking his son every day about school. He shared that he wants to have a presence in his son's education because he did not have that same support from his own father:

"I was eight years old when [my father] left [the country]. He gave me an education, but I feel that I needed more of my father's support being close by."

"Yo tenía ocho años cuando él se vino, siento que sí me dió una educación pero siento que diario me hizo falta el apoyo de mi papá, como estar cerca."

Another mother who, in addition to her preschool aged child, has adult children, shared what she has learned about the importance of partnering with teachers.

"Get into their classroom if you can... 'What are you learning?' 'What's the lesson?' ...Take that home and refer back to it. Then [the teachers] learn that you do know what's going on at school, that you're working together. You and the school are working together to make [your children] adults...Some of my hardest years with my grown kids was when I couldn't be as involved in the school as I could have been."

Key Takeaways

- ▶ These parents valued activities that help prepare their children for kindergarten, particularly socio-emotional activities that help them learn to interact with other children, recognize emotions, and learn empathy; they also appreciated the cultural and linguistic supports in the OCDC classrooms. These parents want their children to learn to appreciate and understand different cultures.
- ▶ Some parents were challenged by the cost of care outside of OCDC, which often exceeds what they make at work. Two parents (both mothers) stopped working to take care of their children, while another needed to be very cautious about working more hours or accepting a better job to stay eligible for her Employment-Related Day Care subsidy.
- ▶ These parents expressed the need for extended care hours and additional care days. Some parents found it challenging to arrange care outside of school or OCDC hours and to transition between care situations.
- ▶ Most parents relied on referrals from friends, family, and coworkers to find care.
- ▶ This group of parents were very motivated to stay involved with their children's education by helping with homework, attending parent meetings, and partnering with teachers and schools, which are "parenting engagement" program components.

Acknowledgements

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Opiniones de padres sobre el cuidado infantil

OCDC Gresham

En enero de 2020, se llevó a cabo una jornada de conversación comunitaria con padres en Gresham, Oregon para conocer sus necesidades de cuidado infantil y sus experiencias al respecto en la comunidad. Esta jornada formó parte de una serie de jornadas con familias que se llevaron a cabo con fondos provenientes de la Subvención para el Desarrollo de la Educación Preescolar en el marco de una evaluación de las necesidades de aprendizaje temprano en todo el estado. El objetivo de las jornadas era escuchar las opiniones de familias que aún no estaban registradas para comprender las necesidades y las experiencias de aprendizaje temprano de las familias. Esta jornada fue codiseñada, planificada y organizada por la Coalición de Desarrollo Infantil de Oregon (OCDC) y por investigadores de AB Cultural Drivers, de la Universidad Estatal de Portland y del Centro de Aprendizaje Social de Oregon. Asistieron a la jornada ocho madres y tres padres que actualmente viven en Gresham. Ocho de los padres y madres vinieron a Oregon desde México, y cuatro de ellos especificaron que provenían de Oaxaca. Los restantes tres padres y madres habían nacido en Texas, Arizona y California. Dos madres se autoidentificaron como indígenas estadounidenses. La jornada de conversación comunitaria se llevó a cabo principalmente en español, con traducción al inglés disponible para los dos participantes que no hablaban español.

Experiencias actuales con el cuidado infantil y desarrollo de la preparación escolar

¿Quién cuida actualmente a sus hijos de 0 a 5 años y qué actividades realizan?

Todos los padres en la jornada de conversación tenían hijos que actualmente asisten o pronto asistirán al servicio de cuidado infantil de la OCDC. Además de este cuidado, cuatro padres manifestaron que dependen de familiares y amigos que los apoyan con el cuidado de los niños. Una madre describió que intercambia el cuidado infantil con otras familias que tienen hijos pequeños, y que depende de niñeras adolescentes. Una pareja de crianza



¿Cuál sería la varita mágica? ¿Qué los ayudaría a desempeñar sus roles de padres de la mejor manera posible?

Estos padres hablaron acerca del valor del tiempo, la paciencia y la curiosidad. Expresaron el deseo de pasar más tiempo con sus hijos. Incluso una madre dijo que desearía no tener que trabajar.

informó que la madre se encargaba de todo el cuidado de los niños antes de que su hijo asistiera a la OCDC. Esta pareja de crianza no dependía de niñeras, amigos ni familiares para el cuidado infantil.

Muchos padres estuvieron de acuerdo en que, mientras se encuentran con amigos y familiares, sus hijos pasan el tiempo mirando televisión o con una tableta. En entornos de cuidado más formales, los padres describieron que sus hijos juegan con otros niños (p. ej., juegan a corretearse, cantan, bailan), practican habilidades sociales, y aprenden a leer y escribir. Varios padres enfatizaron que sus hijos aprendieron a hacer amigos en entornos de cuidado infantil. Una madre dijo: "La guardería es el lugar donde uno aprende a no ser un patán." Estos padres dijeron que, en la OCDC, sus hijos están aprendiendo habilidades socioemocionales, como reconocer emociones y empatizar con los demás.

Muchos padres describieron los apoyos culturales y lingüísticos que existen en la OCDC. Las maestras sirven comida latina/mexicana, hay arte nativo en todo el salón de clases y los salones de clases son bilingües en español e inglés. Una madre expresó por qué es importante tener salones de clases bilingües:

"A veces cuando entras a una escuela donde no te hablan en tu idioma a veces se siente intimidante. Y hay situaciones, por ejemplo, cuando mi suegro vino por mi niño, él dice 'wow hablan español'. Son cosas chiquitas pero tienen impacto en nuestra comunidad."

Más adelante, esta madre describió que su hijo, que habla en español, está ayudando a otro niño de la OCDC a aprender a hablar en español. Este otro niño está ayudando a su hijo a aprender palabras nuevas en inglés. "Es un intercambio de palabras."

Una pareja de crianza mencionó que la OCDC no puede celebrar plenamente su cultura porque no puede realizar eventos religiosos. Algunos padres mencionaron que envían a sus hijos a México, donde pueden absorber la cultura mexicana (incluidos los eventos religiosos) y el idioma. Algunos padres dijeron que es importante que sus hijos estén expuestos a otras culturas para que puedan aprender a comprender a los demás.

Un padre dijo: **"Cada estado tiene diferentes culturas y me gusta que él participe con diferentes culturas igual con la cultura que a lo mejor ellos van a crecer, ya que ellos son estadounidenses, me gustaría que practique todas las culturas que pueda, para que así pueda entender a cada una de las personas, ya que no todos somos de la misma cultura."**

Otro padre dijo: **"Yo siento que me gustaría que aprendiera todas esas culturas para que pudiera entender a la demás gente como a sus amigos."**



Los programas de aprendizaje a temprana edad ayudaron a identificar niños con necesidades especiales

Una madre está agradecida con la OCDC porque ayudaron a identificar el autismo de su hijo.

“Cuando empecé a traerlo aquí es cuando nos dimos cuenta que tenía autismo y es algo que yo pienso que si no lo hubiera traído aquí no lo hubiera sabido. Me dijeron dónde tenía que ir. Ya habla mucho más que antes, antes no hablaba nada. Ya tiene el año pasado y este año que tiene aquí, ha aprendido mucho.”

Su situación ideal de cuidado infantil

¿En qué horarios o días de la semana les gustaría que sus hijos estén bajo cuidado?

Como era de esperar, las distintas familias tenían necesidades diferentes: Una madre, en broma, dijo “todos los días, las 24 horas.”

Cinco padres dijeron que para ellos sería ideal contar con cuidado infantil de día completo, de 7:30 o 8:00am a 4:00 o 5:00pm, 4 o 5 días a la semana. Sin embargo, un padre dijo que cree que eso sería difícil para los niños: **“Si estuvieran toda la tarde sería lo mismo que cuando uno está trabajando y no los ve aunque estén en la casa.”**

Otros padres dijeron que el horario actual de medio día de la OCDC (de 9:00am a 12:30pm) funciona bien para sus necesidades, aunque un par de padres dijo que sería útil una pequeña extensión. Una madre dijo que las 12:30pm es algunas veces un horario difícil para recoger a su hijo debido a su horario laboral. “Ni siquiera como porque tengo que ir a buscarlo”. Una madre sugirió que una noche de cuidado en la OCDC, una vez al mes, sería una oportunidad especial para que los padres salgan. Los demás padres estuvieron de acuerdo con esta idea. Los padres que asistieron a esta jornada eran conscientes de que una situación de cuidado infantil que funciona para ellos podría no ser ideal para otros padres con necesidades diferentes.

¿Qué tipos de actividades educativas, artísticas y de otro tipo les gustaría que sus hijos reciban para ayudarlos a prepararse para el kínder?

Una madre contó que sueña con grupos de edades mezcladas que comiencen programas de aprendizaje a temprana edad desde el nacimiento:

“Me encantaría ver un entorno multicultural, multigeneracional y para diversas edades. La forma en que organizamos la escuela, los de un año, los de dos años...y así hasta los dieciocho. En realidad no es normal para una sociedad en funcionamiento; lo hacemos solamente porque es fácil. Los niños pequeños podrían beneficiarse al estar en un entorno de clases con niños más grandes. Los niños más grandes podrían tener el apoyo de los adultos. Entonces todos aprenderían al tener a alguien más grande en el salón. Todos podrían compartir la carga de criar a los bebés...No estamos diciendo: ‘bien, ahora, una maestra debe enseñar todos los grados’, sino que todos ayudan.”

Los padres también describieron actividades enriquecedoras que les gustaría que se agregaran a las experiencias de cuidado infantil de sus hijos, como música, cocina, construcción, reciclaje, estudios de la naturaleza, habilidades para la vida y exposición a diferentes profesiones. Dos padres quieren que sus hijos aprendan técnicas de cuidado personal, tales como maneras de calmarse por sí solos cuando están abrumados usando la meditación o el yoga.

Encontrar el cuidado infantil adecuado

Muchos padres dependen de las referencias de amigos, familiares y colegas para encontrar cuidado infantil. Un padre dijo que encontró la OCDC gracias a un folleto. Un padre dijo que le gustaría que la OCDC hiciera más publicidad, con folletos en más lugares, o quizás en algunas estaciones de radio de música en español. Una madre comentó que, muchos años atrás, era más desafiante encontrar cuidado infantil, y también describió cómo usa las redes sociales para encontrar cuidado infantil:

“Hace 20 años, cuando tenía que buscar una guardería, Facebook no existía. MySpace no existía. Entonces, tuve que preguntar en la escuela: ‘¿qué niñera hay en el vecindario?’...Alguien me remitió con ella...pero la personalidad de mi hijo mayor y la de ella no se llevaban bien. Me llamó al trabajo y me dijo que retirara a mi hijo, que era mi último día. Yo tenía trabajo, tenía clases, entonces me ayudaron a cubrir mis turnos durante dos días, pero necesitaba encontrar a alguien. Entonces recurrí a Craigslist...no tenía tiempo para realmente llegar a conocerlos...Debía volver al trabajo.” Esta madre describió otras soluciones fragmentadas, que incluyeron preguntar a otros padres que tenían hijos en el kínder de su hijo si sabían de algún cuidado por la tarde, y cuenta: “En realidad, tuve que arreglármelas durante muchos años. Fue difícil.” Ahora, usa grupos de apoyo para padres en Facebook como recurso para encontrar cuidado infantil con rapidez.

Dos padres enfatizaron la dificultad de encontrar cuidadores de confianza:

“Es difícil más cuando no conoces a la persona y darle como lo más valioso que tengas a esa persona, sin saber lo que en realidad está pasando debajo de su techo, fue un proceso difícil...Fue hasta momentos donde pensé que no necesitaba trabajar, me estresaba hasta que procesaba que ellos están bien, ellos tienen experiencia, tienen criminal record, está a dos cuadras de mi trabajo... hasta la fecha mi niño más chiquito voy por él y no se quiere venir, entonces creo que es algo bueno.”

“Es la ex esposa de mi papá cuidaba a mis niñas, pero ni siquiera tiene la paciencia de cuidar...porque ahora sí estoy aquí, y si no estoy, no sé lo que va a pasar...pero dije ‘mejor la llevo a una señora que tenga paciencia.’”



¿Han tenido alguna vez que dejar de trabajar para cuidar a sus hijos porque el cuidado infantil es demasiado costoso?

El costo fue realmente un desafío. Tres madres hablaron acerca de las dificultades para encontrar un equilibrio entre el gasto de cuidar a sus hijos y salir a trabajar. Dos tuvieron que dejar su trabajo porque no podían pagar el costo del cuidado infantil.

“Tuve que dejar, iba prácticamente a trabajar para la babysitter [...] ‘y pues yo no me quedaba con nada.’”

“A mí me gustaría trabajar y no pude aplicar al childcare porque son \$1200 al mes por el más chiquito. (Durante esas tres horas yo pudiera agarrar un part time o hacer algo productivo.) Porque desde que empecé a estar en casa me dió lo que es ansiedad y depresión, todo se junta. Pero \$1200 es mucho dinero.”

“Cuando contaba con una guardería relacionada con el empleo (ERDC, por sus siglas en inglés), es decir, que el estado pagaba parte del cuidado infantil, tenía que ser muy cuidadosa con mis ingresos. Si superaba el requisito de ingresos económicos, todo el costo de la guardería dependería de mí...Si quieres un mejor trabajo, o un aumento, o más horas, no puedes simplemente ganar un poco más de dinero; debes generar mucho más dinero para cubrir la pérdida del apoyo para cuidado infantil.”

Sus necesidades como padres

¿Qué necesitan para poder apoyar a sus hijos cuando ingresan al kínder?

Los padres hablaron acerca de la importancia de participar y comprometerse con la educación de sus hijos.

“...Somos los primeros maestros, y no darle la carga a los maestros de que ellos le tienen que enseñar, o nomás porque son los maestros, entonces [nosotros nos] involucramos más en tareas...”

Un padre se dedica a ir a las reuniones de padres y pregunta a su hijo todos los días cómo le fue en la escuela. Comentó que quiere estar presente en la educación de su hijo porque él no recibió ese mismo apoyo de su propio padre:

“Yo tenía ocho años cuando él se vino, siento que sí me dió una educación pero siento que diario me hizo falta el apoyo de mi papá, como estar cerca.”

Otra madre que, además de su hijo en edad preescolar, tiene hijos adultos, compartió que ha aprendido sobre la importancia de trabajar con las maestras.

“Entren en el salón de clases si pueden...’ ¿Qué están aprendiendo?’ ¿De qué se trata la lección?’ ...Lleven eso a su casa y vuelvan a mencionarlo. Entonces, [las maestras] descubren que ustedes saben lo que sucede en la escuela, que están trabajando juntos. Ustedes y la escuela están trabajando juntos para que [sus hijos] se conviertan en adultos...Algunos de mis años más difíciles con mis hijos mayores fueron cuando no pude involucrarme con la escuela tanto como hubiese querido.”

Aportes clave

- ▶ Estos padres valoran las actividades que ayudan a preparar a sus hijos para el kínder; en particular, las actividades socioemocionales que los ayudan a aprender a interactuar con otros niños, reconocer las emociones y desarrollar la empatía; también aprecian los apoyos culturales y lingüísticos en los salones de clases de la OCDC. Estos padres quieren que sus hijos aprendan a valorar y comprender diferentes culturas.
- ▶ Algunos padres se enfrentaron al desafío del costo del cuidado fuera de la OCDC, que a menudo supera lo que ganan en el trabajo. Dos madres dejaron de trabajar para cuidar a sus hijos, mientras que otra debió tener mucho cuidado de no trabajar más horas ni aceptar un trabajo mejor para poder seguir siendo elegible para el subsidio de guardería relacionada con el empleo.
- ▶ Estas madres manifestaron la necesidad de un horario de cuidado infantil extendido y de más días de cuidado. A algunos padres les resultó difícil organizar el cuidado de sus hijos fuera de la escuela o de las horas de la OCDC y realizar la transición entre las situaciones de cuidado infantil.
- ▶ La mayoría de los padres confiaban en las recomendaciones de amigos, familiares y colegas para encontrar opciones de cuidado infantil.
- ▶ Este grupo de padres se mostró muy motivado por involucrarse en la educación de sus hijos ayudando con las tareas para el hogar, asistiendo a las reuniones de padres y compartiendo la crianza con las maestras y la escuela, los cuales son componentes del programa de “compromiso de crianza de los hijos.”

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Appendix A

Table 2. Existing *Family Voices* reports

Release Date	Title	Geographic Location	Communities Prioritized	Languages Represented	Methods	Participants	Purpose
2015-09	Juntos Aprendemos: Demonstrating the Strengths of a Community-Based Kindergarten Readiness Program with Latino Families Using Qualitative and Quantitative Evaluation Design	Multnomah	Latino/a/x	Spanish, English	6 Focus Groups, Retrospective Pre-Post Surveys	24 Focus Group Participants, 37 Survey Respondents	Founded in response to Latino parents' determination to close the achievement gap, Juntos Aprendemos utilizes community-based solutions as it builds parents' capacity as their children's first teachers and strongest advocates. This report uses quantitative and qualitative evaluation to demonstrate the program is achieving its goals for children and parents.
2016-07	Parent Voices: Supporting Our Parents to Help Children Succeed	Multnomah	Native American, African American, Latino/a/x, Middle Eastern, Pacific Islander, White, Home Forward-Engaged Families	Spanish, English	Focus Groups	79	To understand needs and ideas for supporting early learning and strong school attendance.
2016-10	Racism, Toxic Stress & Birth Outcomes: Finding Solutions in Conversations with Healthy Birth Initiative Clients	Multnomah	African American, Former and Current HBI Participants	English	Focus Groups	8	To understand sources and experiences of pre- and post-partum stress and coping strategies.
2016-12	Learning from Families at Earl Boyles Elementary about Housing Issues in their Community	Multnomah, Earl Boyles Elementary Catchment Area	Asian, Latino/a/x Families	Spanish, Chinese, English	Focus Groups, Interviews	9	To better understand the housing needs and desired supports and services for families in the Earl Boyles neighborhood.
2017-02	Multnomah County Home Visiting Community of Practice: Parent Advisory Committee Listening Session	Multnomah	African American, Former and Current HBI Participants	English	Focus Groups	6	Understand families' experiences with home visiting (early childhood home-based) services broadly, and specifically about intake and engagement in supports.
2017-04	Learning from Community Ambassadors at Earl Boyles Elementary School	Multnomah, Earl Boyles Elementary Catchment Area	African American, Former and Current HBI Participants	Spanish, Chinese, Vietnamese, English	Focus Groups	3	To better understand the role of Community Ambassadors, learn about supports and resources they need to advance their work, and generate ideas to increase access to and utilization of services and programs in the community.
2017-06	Welcome Baby 2.0: Inputs from Parents & Community Partners	Multnomah	Asian, Latino/a/x	Not Explicitly Reported	Focus Groups	Not Reported	Additional focus groups were held with parents who participated in culturally specific home visiting programs to understand their experience with outreach, intake and referral coordination.

Release Date	Title	Geographic Location	Communities Prioritized	Languages Represented	Methods	Participants	Purpose
2017-07	Earl Boyles Neighborhood Center Services	Multnomah, Earl Boyles Elementary Catchment Area	Earl Boyles Catchment Area	Not Explicitly Reported	Focus Groups	8	Learn about families' experience with the Neighborhood Center, gain insight into benefits of having supports co-located within an elementary school, and learn about ways to improve the services offered as well as methods for communicating about these services and engaging other parents.
2017-12	Kindergarten Inclusion Cohort Survey: 2010-2018		African American, Latino/a/x	English	Survey	36	Understand impact on families of participating in Kindergarten Inclusion Cohort.
2018-03	Kindergarten Readiness Focus Group: Portland		Asian, Latino/a/x, Pacific Islander	Spanish, English	Focus Groups	12	Understand what kindergarten readiness means for parents and children, what early learning supports and health services have families participated in, how have these supports and services helped, and what do families wish early learning supports and health services would do differently to better support kinder readiness.
2018-03	Kindergarten Readiness Focus Group: Gresham-Fairview		Earl Boyles Catchment Area	Spanish, Chuukese, English	Focus Groups	16	Understand what kindergarten readiness means for parents and children, what early learning supports and health services have families participated in, how have these supports and services helped, and what do families wish early learning supports and health services would do differently to better support kinder readiness.
2018-03	Kindergarten Readiness Focus Group: Oregon Center for Children & Youth with Special Health Needs (OCCYSHN)	Multnomah	Families Whose Children Have a Disability, OCCYSHN-Engaged Families	English	Focus Groups	8	Understand what kindergarten readiness means for parents and children, what early learning supports and health services have families participated in, how have these supports and services helped, and what do families wish early learning supports and health services would do differently to better support kinder readiness.
2018-07	Preschool Research Project	Multnomah	Nepali Bhutanese, Burmese, Congolese, Iraqi, Latino/a/x, Pacific Islander, Slavic, Somali, Vietnamese IRCO-Engaged Families	Multiple		90	To assess the early learning needs and priorities of immigrant and refugee families and define the gaps in accessing early learning/preschool environments that are responsive to their cultural and linguistic diversity.
2018-12	Infant-Toddler Assessment Phase 2: Listening Sessions	Multnomah, Washington	Native American, African American, Latino/a/x Families Involved with HBI, NAYA, Latino Networks, and Parenting Together, Washington County	Spanish English		29	Understand families' experiences accessing infant- toddler resources and supports.

Release Date	Title	Geographic Location	Communities Prioritized	Languages Represented	Methods	Participants	Purpose
Fall 2019	South-Central Early Learning HUB Key Findings; South-Central Early Learning HUB Strategic Planning Evaluation-Pacific Research and Evaluation Final Report	Douglas, Klamath, and Lake Counties	Rural Parents	English		Not Reported	Learn about families prioritize for preschool and early learning program expansion.
Fall 2019	121319 Eastern Oregon Hub SSA ECE Submitted	Malheur ESD	African Immigrants, Latino/a/x, Foster Parents, Below 100% FPL, Frontier	Spanish, Swahili, English		13 Refugee Families from Africa/Middle East; 66 Latino/a/x; 10 foster; 150 with 0-2 year olds	School Success Act Early Childhood Community Engagement—parent needs and priorities for child care programming.
Fall 2019	Maternal and Child Health Needs Assessment Final	Coos & Curry Counties	Homeless Families	English	Focus Groups	40	Inform maternal and child health-related needs assessment; specific child care questions were generally not included.
Fall 2019	NWRES D sessions	Astoria, Tillamook, Scappoose	Migrant Parents	English	Focus Groups	Not Reported	NWRES D Early Childhood Sector engagement- family needs and priorities for child care and early learning programs.
Fall 2019	Preschool Promise (3 agencies)	Rainier, St. Helens, TELC	Rural, Families in PreK Promise	English	Focus Groups	Not Reported	NWRES D Early Childhood Sector engagement- family needs and priorities for child care and early learning programs.
Fall 2019	Parent Advisory (2 counties)	Clatsop, Tillamook	Rural, Parents in Parent Advisory Council	English	Focus Groups	Not Reported	NWRES D Early Childhood Sector engagement- family needs and priorities for child care and early learning programs.
Fall 2019	SSA Engagement, Spanish Speaking Parents	Tillamook County	Spanish Speaking Living in Public Housing	Spanish	Focus Groups	Not Reported	NWRES D Early Childhood Sector engagement- family needs and priorities for child care and early learning programs.
Fall 2019	Head Start EI ECSE (4 counties)	Clatskanie, Rainier, Tillamook, Vernonia	Families with Children in EI/ECSE	English	Focus Groups	Not Reported	NWRES D Early Childhood Sector engagement- family needs and priorities for child care and early learning programs.
Fall 2019	Seaside EI ECSE (1 parent)	Clatsop County	EI ECSE Involved Spanish Speaker	Spanish	Focus Groups	1	NWRES D Early Childhood Sector engagement- family needs and priorities for child care and early learning programs
Fall 2019	Spanish Speaking Parents at Emerald Height Apartments	Forest Grove	Spanish Speaking Housing Complex	Spanish	Focus Groups	4	NWRES D Early Childhood Sector engagement- family needs and priorities for child care and early learning programs