



Southern Oregon Early Learning Services Hub • Family Needs Assessment 2022

WHAT WE DID

In partnership with our OHSU nursing students, Southern Oregon Early Learning Hub designed and promoted a survey for families who have children under age six and reside in Jackson or Josephine Counties.

WHY WE DID IT

We are half way through 2022 and it felt very important to check in with families with young children in southern Oregon to see how they are doing and what they are needing. The last two years have been very challenging for all of us and especially for families with young children. When other complexities are layered in, such as language diversity, children experiencing a disability, families in rural communities, and families experiencing economic hardship, the challenges increase. Lack of access to timely supports, in person services, and social connections adversely impact our families and their children.

WHO WE HEARD FROM

We received **340 survey responses** and had **20 families participate in empathy interviews**, to gain a deeper understanding of the needs of our families.

Race/Ethnicity

- 3% American Indian/Alaskan Native
- 1% Asian
- 2% Black/African American
- 1% Native Hawaiian/Another Pacific Islander
- 20% Latino/a/x
- 70% White
- 5% Multi-racial
- 2% Other

County

- 69% Jackson
- 31% Josephine

Relationship To Child(ren)

Respondents were mostly birth parents, but also included grandparents, foster/resource parents, and other relatives.

5% consider themselves homeless

Language Spoken at Home

- 80% English
- 16% Spanish
- 3% American Sign Language
- 1% Other (Portuguese, both English and Spanish)

Age

Respondents ranged in age from under 17 to over 60

Disability

- 15% have a child(ren) who have a disability
- 73% do not have a child(ren) who has a disability
- 12% have a concern, but do not have a diagnosis



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WHAT WE LEARNED

- 17% of families who need language translation support state it has not been available when they are needed
- 25% do not think their children get enough time for learning or play activities each week
- The types of educational support families think would be most helpful right now are:
 - 25% play groups
 - 25% Preschool/Pre-K
 - 25% Head Start/Preschool Promise
 - 19% Child Care
 - 5% Other (homeschool groups, community activities such as children’s museum, gymnastics, Summer activities)

Families want in-person connection. The top 3 activities that would assist families right now:

- Outdoor activities
- Educational learning
- Art and Music

When asked the best way to receive resources, the top 5 answers:

- 25% by text
- 13% online
- 11% by phone
- 10% playgroup
- 9% parenting class

The top playgroup or parent group focus areas were:

- 14% groups for toddlers
- 12% Preschool
- 10% groups for stay at home parents
- 9% groups for kindergarten age children
- 8% play therapy groups

The classes of most interest to families are:

- 10% Music
- 10% Art and crafts
- 9% Preschool style groups
- 8% Dance
- 7% story times
- 6% Playgroups

Multiple opportunities to engage are needed. Families were equally interested in playgroups or support groups happening in morning, afternoon, weekdays and weekends.

Transportation is a barrier to connection. 15% of families need help getting to parenting or play groups.

More resources to support children’s social and emotional support are needed. Fewer than half of families stated they have sufficient resources and support for their children’s social, emotional and learning needs.



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The 20 empathy interviews revealed that the barriers families experience to getting the help they need have been compounded due to the strain on regional programs caused by the pandemic.

A lack of access to affordable child care is pervasive. Many families lack support from extended family, friend, and community organizations. Many feel their children need more social and emotional support that they are receiving and either do not know where to go or have experienced long wait lists or inadequate frequency of services. This was noted particularly around support a child's disability, and for the parent's mental health and substance use disorder treatment needs. The majority of families emphasized they are interested in more in-person services and that virtual services have not provided the same level of service for their needs. Families whose home language is Spanish or whose children experience a disability have ongoing issues of equitable access and support.

HOW YOU CAN APPLY THIS FEEDBACK FROM FAMILIES

- Join **Connect Oregon/Unite Us**, the region's closed loop referral platform, to increase the supports to families when you make a referral and to strengthen the safety net of support.
- Promote **Help Me Grow** to families.
- Have your staff receive training to become a **Kaleidoscope Play and Learn** Facilitator. Funding provided by Southern Oregon Early Learning Hub.
- Promote Kaleidoscope Play and Learn Groups, if your staff cannot offer it directly.
- Host a weekly **support group** for the community – mom's group, dad's group, breastfeeding support, informal play group for families, etc. What special support is your organization well-suited to provide?
- Promote **parenting education opportunities** from The Family Connection, our region's OPEC hub.
- Become knowledgeable about, and promote, **Head Start, Preschool Promise and Employment Related Day Care Subsidy (ERDC)** to families.
- Review your services to see if they are accessible in languages other than English. Do people with language needs other than English receive fewer services from you? What changes can be made?
- Is your staff bilingual? Do you have 5 minutes a day? **Duolingo** is free and effective! Teams can do this together.
- Do you know which other organizations your families access? Do you coordinate with those appointments to reduce transportation challenges?
- Use the checklist provided by Trauma Informed Oregon, to see what changes you might be able to make that will reduce trauma for your families.
- Ask families to give honest feedback about what's working and not working for them at your organization. And then, make those changes.
- Ask you families if in-person, virtual, or hybrid is best for them. Adjust accordingly.



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- Use **SOELS' Protective Factors Toolkit**. Introduce it at team meetings so all team members are aware of it, build the strategies into your daily engagement with families. Remember to include your front desk/reception staff!
- Conduct a **Protective Factors assessment** for your organization and identify strategies to implement. Bring this data and these suggestions to other committees or groups you are connected to. Let's change the culture of southern Oregon to one that is inclusive of all families and responsive to their needs.
- Message to families that the entire region is focused on improving supports for families and ask them for continuous feedback on our progress.