



WASHINGTON
COMMUNITIES
for CHILDREN



Early Learning Community Outreach SUMMARY REPORT

Olympic-Kitsap Peninsula

Prepared for the
Washington State Early Learning Plan Needs Assessment

Data gathered September/October 2019

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Background & Methodology

In 2018, Washington State was awarded the federal Preschool Development Birth Through Five Grant (PDG). The funding was allocated to the Department of Children Youth and Families (DCYF) to facilitate collaboration and coordination among existing programs of early childhood care and education. As part of the grant, DCYF partnered with stakeholders to conduct a comprehensive statewide birth through five needs assessment, followed by an in-depth strategic plan. The full strategic plan is still under development.

The Washington Communities for Children (WCFC) regions partnered with DCYF in the fall of 2019 to gather feedback for the Needs Assessment. In a one-month period, WCFC collectively hosted 90 listening sessions and gathered input from 931 diverse participants across Washington State. Types of providers interviewed included families, child care providers, social service organizations, early intervention providers, home visitors, school districts, play and learn groups, and others.

Every comment from every participant was reviewed and “coded” based on the five categories in the Strategic Organizing Framework. This framework was developed in collaboration with the project Steering Committee. The Framework will be used as the organizing structure for the Needs Assessment and the development of a statewide Strategic Plan. The five categories in the Strategic Organizing Framework include the following:

- **Powerful Communities & Responsive Early Learning System**
- **Healthy Children & Families**
- **Positive Early Learning Experiences**
- **Strong, Stable, Safe, Nurturing, and Supported Families**
- **Supported Early Learning Workforce**

In addition, some comments from participants were coded as “Cross-Cutting” because they reflected overarching themes that transcend any of the five Framework categories.



Background & Methodology (continued)

For each of the five Framework categories, and the Cross-Cutting themes, 10 – 20 specific codes were developed in order to consistently identify the subject of every comment. The codes were developed based on the issues being addressed in the Needs Assessment, and in collaboration with Washington Communities for Children (WCFC).

This report outlines the Needs Assessment results from the WCFC interviews, specifically from the **Olympic-Kitsap Peninsula Region**.



Data Sources



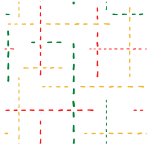
- 6 group meetings
- 6 interviews in home visiting settings



- **Self-reported race and ethnicity** (NOTE: Only 22 of 74 participants reported)



- **Hosts/Groups included:** OESD 114 Policy Council Meeting, Bethany Lutheran Preschool Fundraiser, Holly Ridge Staff Meeting; and Givens Recreation Center Play & Learn (3 meetings)
- **Respondent composition:** A mixture of early learning professionals, parents and caregivers.



Cross-Cutting Issues

Availability of Services (15 comments) & Access (3 comments) & Affordability (3 comments)

Many parents expressed need for more affordable options for their children – both a need for free or affordable child care and free or affordable activities for their children (or transportation, time to be able to access those activities).

“Not enough affordable childcare and or preschool programs for children that don’t qualify for Head Start”

["Where does your child spend their day and why?"]

“Home, sometimes park, because I don’t have money for other activities.”

Powerful Communities and Responsive Early Learning System



Need for System Financing/Sustainability/Additional Funding Sources (15 comments)

System funding came up primarily by providers who discussed the system is “under-funded,” and that they need “access to more resources,” and funding for “staff/equipment,” including some specific ideas such as on-staff nurse or mental-health professional.



Healthy Children and Families

Food Security and Nutrition (11 comments)

Nutrition was discussed both as part of how parents support their children's development by ensuring they are "eating healthy"; and also parents discussed that they rely on WIC and/or foodbanks as part of providing for their family.

[How do you support your child's health, development, and growth?]

"Good healthy food, sleep and lots of love"

Physical Health (Pediatricians and Medical Providers) (21 comments)

Parents clearly see doctors and attending "well child visits" as integral to how they support their child's health, development and growth, and some mentioned clinics or pediatricians as people or organizations they rely on.

[How do you support your child's health, development, and growth?]

"Preventative care, well child checks, immunizations, eat well, read, limit screen time, activities that support development"

Oral Health (8 comments)

Parents see both teaching good oral hygiene habits and attending the dentist as part of how they support their children's development.

"Take every opportunity to learn. Read, brush teeth and hair. Do art, pick out clothes, take walks, sing songs and go to doctor and dentist."



Healthy Children and Families (continued)

Mental Health (5 comments)

Providers expressed that they would benefit from increased access to more mental health “supports,” “consultation” or “services” for families and for children.

["If you were designing the ideal Early Learning system, what would you change or add?"]

“Access to mental health consultation”



Positive Learning Experiences



Informal Activities (23 comments)

Parents engage in a wide range of informal activities to support their children, from activities at home (games, reading, etc.) to trips to parks, church, and more. If money were no barrier, parents would like to offer more – “I want my child to explore the world,” “field trips,” or simply “Disneyland!”

[How do you support your child's health, development, and growth?]

“Exposure to a lot of things, bike to school, go to YMCA, try new things, work/life balance, church

Head Start / Early Head Start (25 comments)

Many parents mentioned Head Start and Early Head Start as organizations that they rely on and a few mentioned Head Start as part of where their child spends the day.

“Thankful for Head Start staff and good support system.”

Parental Choice / Family Engagement (19 comments)

While some parents keep their younger children at home for economic reasons (affordability, access or needing to work), others discussed choosing to keep their child at home for personal reasons “because we are homebodies”, and would do so even if resources were not an issue

[“If cost and availability were not barriers, where would you want your child to spend their day?”]

“I wouldn't work, I'd stay home with my children.”

Positive Learning Experiences (continued)



Licensed Child Care (11 comments), Non-Licensed Child Care (10 comments), & Family, Friend, and Neighbor Care (8 comments)

Parents discussed the range of solutions for child care and who they rely on, including parents, friends, neighbors, babysitters, nannies, childcare centers and preschools. Providers discussed the need for more – and more affordable or free – child care.

“I rely on state help for paying for child care and medical and dental, friends, and family.”

Developmental Preschool / Children with Special Needs (14 comments)

Several parents mentioned relying on Holly Ridge for support or as part of where their child spends his or her day. In addition, staff mentioned the system needs more support for behavioral health and children with special needs.

["How would you describe the early learning system in WA state?"]

“Lacking early learning partnerships with daycare providers for children with special needs”

Positive Learning Experiences (continued)



ECEAP/ECEAP Expansion (10 comments)

Several parents mentioned that they rely on ECEAP for part of their child-care and some discussed it as a program that they rely on or as part of how they support their child's development.

["Where does your child spend their day?"]

"Part day ECEAP and home."

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["How would you describe the early learning system in WA state?"]

"Lacking early learning partnerships with daycare providers for children with special needs"

Home Visiting (8 comments)

Parents discussed their enrollment in home-visiting as part of how they support their child's development and a few discussed the "home visitor" as someone they rely on.

["How do you support your child's health, development and growth?"]

"Being interactive with them; by being in programs like home visiting."





Strong & Stable Families

Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development (23 comments)

Parents showed understanding of supporting their child's development with their comprehensive care for their children (including medical, nutrition, activities, education, etc.); but there was also interest in training on "activities," "communication" and to build "more confidence in my parenting." Providers suggested the advantage of more training for parents, and mentioned the importance of "working with families during a time of rapid gain in skill."

["What do you love about your family?"]

"Seeing the development of my children"

Kinship Care/Extended Families (38 comments)

Several parents mentioned additional family members (particularly parents and siblings) as both part of where their child spends the day and who they rely on in the community.

"We rely on our family."

Overall Family Stability (29 comments)

Many parents talked about the many reasons they love their families and rely on them for support.

"I love that we stick together – help, teach, support, encourage each other."



Strong & Stable Families (continued)

Parental Resilience (26 comments)

While some parents were content that they “have just what we need,” others offered many things that would make life easier – saying they would appreciate more time, sleep, a cleaner, a cook, respite from watching the kids or more simply “another mother.”

“We are very creative; able to find a way to do something if we do not have the resources.”

Family Economic Needs (25 comments)

Economic need came up in a few ways – parents discussed relying on basic support from WIC and local charities; others discussed needing economic help with transportation (“we don’t have means to get around”) or even diapers or simply needing “more money;” while others mentioned that the need to work kept them from spending time at home with their children. A few providers mentioned that love “Helping parents learn how to advocate.”

“We need a reliable car to feel secure in an emergency.”

Social Connection/Isolation (17 comments)

When discussing who they rely on, several parents mentioned places that helped build social connections, including most often inclusion of the family’s church. Others discussed that parenting would be easier with a “supportive community” or a “mentoring program for parents.”

“It takes a village or community.”



Strong & Stable Families (continued)

System Navigation/Resource Referrals (13 comments)

Parents and caregivers both mentioned resource referrals in two ways – first, who they relied on to help with navigation (community partners, web resources, Facebook communities); and second that they often needed other options or help finding the right services, particularly addressing mental health and special needs.

“I could use more options – legal help, family support, we have high conflict, more mental health services.”



Supported Early Learning Workforce



Professional Development/Training/Coaching/Resources Needed (14 comments)

Most providers expressed interest in more time and funding for training, professional development, and education for them and their peers, particularly around ACES/Trauma, early learning and child development

“Need more training for childcare providers around typical child development.”



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