

**A Cross Sectional Needs Assessment: Parents with Children Under Five in Skagit County**

Kathryn DeFilippo

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Clarence Sprigner

Marieka Klawitter

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Kathryn DeFilippo

## **Abstract**

Engaging families and incorporating their opinions and preferences into community actions is an essential element for implementing successful community support programs (Bailey & Simeonsson, 1988; McNaughton, 1994). The Public Health Department of Skagit County and partner organizations in early learning came together to implement a community needs assessment. A questionnaire was developed for parents with children under five that examined parental needs, preferences, and use of services for families, including Library programs, Early/Head Start, parent groups, Women Infant and Children (WIC) Nutrition Programs and home visiting programs. The intention of the questionnaire was to gauge the state of families and focusing partnering organizations towards improving the community of Skagit County for families. The respondent sample consisted of 463 individuals, with representation from 322 mothers/step-mothers, 32 fathers/step-fathers and 12 caregivers. The findings from the questionnaire showed that families surveyed wanted more community programs and activities, including playgroups. The subgroups analyzed had similarities for preferred methods of communication and different preferences for the types of programs that would be helpful. Respondents of lower income experienced multiple barriers to accessing services and were less aware of programs. This survey was the first step in using the current social networks of the community to engage families and deepen connections with families. Incorporating the parent questionnaire into annual data collection will allow community organizations to learn from and adapt to families' needs.

*Keywords: Parent Survey, Skagit County, Early learning, families, parents, Resiliency, Needs Assessment*

## **A Cross Sectional Needs Assessment:**

### **Parents with Children Under Five in Skagit County**

Engaging families and incorporating their opinions and preferences into community actions is an essential element for implementing successful community support programs (Bailey & Simeonsson, 1988; McNaughton, 1994). The Public Health Department of Skagit County in Washington States and partner organizations in early learning came together in the summer of 2014 to implement a community needs assessment. A countywide survey of parents with children under five was developed to examine how the community could better meet the needs of parents. The intention of the questionnaire was to gauge the state of families and focusing partnering organizations towards improving the community of Skagit County for families.

The questionnaire asked about parents' perceptions and use of family support programs including Early/Head Start, Library programs, home visiting programs, Women Infant and Child (WIC) Nutrition Programs, and parent groups (See Appendix A for more information on each program). Additional questions were asked to assess parents' preferences. With the aim to improve communications with families, and determine the factors influencing use of community programs and clarify what types of programs parents wanted.

During the time of this research, Skagit County Public Health Department was interested in addressing adversity in early life, providing support to families with young children, and cultivating resiliency through creating safe, stable, and nurturing relationships and environments for families (Mercy & Saul, 2009).

This report features key findings, trends and recommendations to improve programs, to assist organizations serving families in meeting parental needs and supporting resiliency in families.

## **Background**

Supporting parents and young children, through community-based programs that foster resiliency, can have lasting positive effects (Felitti, et al., 1998; Shonkoff & Phillips, 2011; Paul, 2010). Since Barker's hypothesis was introduced in 1995, many studies have supported his findings, that early childhood experiences affect adult health outcomes (Braveman & Barclay, 2009). Experiences, as early as in the womb, can shape emotional, social and physical capacities. Interventions before the age of five have the potential to alter the effects of childhood trauma and support healthy adult development.

### **Life Course Theory**

Life Course Theory is a framework, based on the science of fetal development, that allows the examination of health as it relates to the complex interplay of biology, psychology, and social development (Elder, 1998). Life Course Theory posits that there are critical or sensitive periods of development, the impacts of exposures are intergenerational, and the effects of exposure are accumulative overtime (Braveman & Barclay, 2009). The time before age five is considered a critical period for development. Exposures that occur during this instrumental time can have a lasting and lifelong effect on health and physical and social development (Braveman & Barclay, 2009). Life Course Theory has gained support with one of the largest studies examining the impacts of childhood trauma on adult health, the Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) study.

### **Adverse Childhood Experiences**

The (ACE) study was one of the most seminal studies looking at the impact of childhood trauma on adult health. Nearly 20,000 individuals took part in the study from 1995 to 1997

(Felitti, et al., 1998); to date the findings have been used in more than 50 research papers (CDC, 2014).

The ACE studies found that early childhood trauma can lead to disparities in adult cognitive, behavioral, and physical development (Braveman & Barclay, 2009). Physiological changes due to toxic stress in early life can create permanent neurological response pathways and alter the structure of the brain (Shonkoff, et al., 2012), influencing a child's developmental capacities (Braveman, Egerter, & Williams, 2011). The effects of early childhood adversity influence the entire trajectory of an individual (Felitti, et al., 1998).

Exposure to high levels of stress during those critical years can increase an individual's susceptibility to illness and disease and even hasten death by up to 20 years (Shonkoff, et al., 2012; Felitti, et al., 1998). An adult with more adverse childhood experiences will likely have greater challenges with higher-level brain functioning and be more prone to emotional and mental instability and depression (Shonkoff, et al., 2012; Felitti, et al., 1998).

ACE's scores are a predictor, for multiple generations, of achievement and health outcomes. Parents with three or more ACEs were found to be 400 times more likely to have children who experienced higher levels of adverse experiences (Stanton, 2014). ACEs are persistent in higher risk populations that may face greater barriers to accessing services that could protect against the damages of early adversity and toxic stress (Shonkoff, et al., 2012).

Increases in the number of ACEs have been directly correlated with increases in negative outcomes (Felitti, et al., 1998; Forrest & Riley, 2004), yet ACEs can be incredibly common. In Washington State, at least 62 percent of the populations had one or more ACEs (Stanton, 2014), and in Skagit County 33 percent of the population was found to have three or more ACEs (Stanton, 2014).

## **Resiliency**

Research supports that developmental pathways originated by early childhood trauma can be interrupted and altered (Braveman, Egerter, & Williams, 2011). Early childhood development interventions to nurture and stimulate children and support and educate parents can reduce and mitigate the negative impacts on toxic stress on children's cognitive, emotional and physical development (Braveman, Egerter, & Williams, 2011).

Research suggests that safe, stable, and nurturing environments can alter the negative effects of adverse experiences (Mercy & Saul, 2009). Resiliency in children or “staying calm and in control when faced with a challenge” can mitigate the effects of ACEs (Bethell, Newacheck, Hawes, & Halfon, 2014). Family has been found to be the most influential protective factor for children (Forrest & Riley, 2004). Research supports that children with parents that are sensitive to their capabilities and development encourage greater emotional security, social competence and intellectual achievements (Belsky, 1984). Further research has shown that the quality of parental support to children is the single greatest influential factor of their cognitive and social skills (NICHD, 2003; Lamb, 2010).

Early development support programs can encourage and facilitate positive parenting through education, resources, and social support (Belsky, 1984; Mercy & Saul, 2009). Positive educational and community environments have the potential to prevent or soften the negative impacts of toxic stress (Forrest & Riley, 2004) and influence adult health and wellbeing (Shonkoff, et al., 2012). Shonkoff (2011) found that, while there are opportunities for intervention to promote positive outcomes and counter the effects of adversity, the most critical time for development intervention is before the age of five (Shonkoff & Phillips).

## Skagit County

This study was conducted in Skagit County, located in Northwest Washington. The population is 119,500 people in an area of 1,920 square miles. Table 1 displays relevant demographic information. Compared to other counties in Washington State, Skagit County has slightly elevated rates of socio-economic disadvantages, ranking 20th out of 39 counties in Washington State on social economic factors, including unemployment, poverty and education (Institute, 2014).

| <b>Data from Skagit County</b>                                     | <b>Skagit</b> | <b>Washington</b> |
|--|---------------|-------------------|
| Population, 2014   | 116,901       | 6,968,200         |
| White alone, percent, 2013   | 91.1%         | 81.2%             |
| Black or African American alone, percent, 2013                     | 0.9%          | 4.0%              |
| American Indian and Alaska Native alone, percent, 2013             | 2.7%          | 1.9%              |
| Asian alone, percent, 2013   | 2.1%          | 7.9%              |
| Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone, percent, 2013    | 0.3%          | 0.7%              |
| Hispanic or Latino, percent, 2013                                  | 17.6%         | 11.9%             |
| White alone, not Hispanic or Latino, percent, 2013                 | 75.8%         | 71.0%             |
| Foreign born persons, percent, 2009-2013                           | 9.3%          | 13.2%             |
| Language other than English spoken at home, pct age 5+, 2009-2013  | 14.2%         | 18.5%             |
| Bachelor's degree or higher, percent of persons age 25+, 2009-2013 | 23.6%         | 31.9%             |
| Median household income, 2009-2013                                 | \$55,925      | \$59,478          |
| Persons below poverty level, percent, 2009-2013                    | 13.5%         | 13.4%             |

Table 1. Demographic data from U.S. Census Bureau: State and County QuickFacts (Bureau, 2013)

Social and economic inequalities may lead to increased barriers to accessing services and has been show to negatively impact health and wellness outcomes (Engle & Black, 2008). Programs designed to reduce social and economic disadvantage, while supporting vulnerable families, may help to alleviate these negative effects (Mercy & Saul, 2009).

Some programs in Skagit County, designed to support lower income families and reduce social and economic disadvantage, were experiencing inconsistency in enrollments: some had lows in enrollment, while others were at capacity. WIC provided low-income families with

nutritional information and vouchers to use at grocery stores and farmers markets. Across the nation the population of eligible families had been increasing, yet participation in WIC had been decreasing since 2010 (USDA, 2013).

This disconnect between the programs available and the lack of interest from the intended audience, was the motivation to develop a questionnaire and better understand parental needs and preferences.

### **Methods**

The Skagit County Public Health Department, in collaboration with community organizations, coalitions, and community members, spearheaded an effort to develop and examine a questionnaire-based needs assessment for the target population. This study included the development of a countywide questionnaire targeted towards parents with children under five and an analysis of the findings of the survey. The aim of the project was to gather and analyze data from families to increase understanding of parent perceptions of opportunities and barriers to supporting their child's development.

The Skagit County parental survey was a cross-sectional descriptive survey. Residents of Skagit County with children under five were the target population. The sample consisted of 463 respondents, with representation from 322 mothers/step-mothers, 32 fathers/step-fathers and 12 caregivers. Table 2 displays relevant demographics.

| <b>Variable</b>                        | <b>N</b> | <b>Valid Percentage</b> |
|--|----------|-------------------------|
| <b>Population</b>                      |          |                         |
| Mother/Step Mother                     | 367      | 88%                     |
| Father/Step Father                     | 37       | 9%                      |
| Caregiver                              | 14       | 3%                      |
| Total                                  | 418      | 100%                    |
| <b>Race/Ethnicity</b>                  |          |                         |
| African American                       | 7        | 2%                      |
| Asian Pacific Islander                 | 18       | 4%                      |
| Caucasian                              | 256      | 60%                     |
| Hispanic/Latino                        | 137      | 32%                     |
| Native American/Alaska Native          | 8        | 2%                      |
| Multi-Racial                           | 3        | 1%                      |
| Total                                  | 429      | 100%                    |
| <b>Primary Language spoken at home</b> |          |                         |
| English                                | 323      | 77%                     |
| Spanish                                | 64       | 15%                     |
| Both English and Spanish               | 32       | 8%                      |
| Total                                  | 419      | 100%                    |
| <b>Annual household income</b>         |          |                         |
| Less than \$20,000                     | 67       | 16%                     |
| \$20,000 to \$39,999                   | 129      | 31%                     |
| \$40,000 to \$59,999                   | 77       | 18%                     |
| \$60,000 or more                       | 146      | 35%                     |
| Total                                  | 419      | 100%                    |

Table 2. Skagit Count Parent Survey respondent demographics

## Questionnaire Design

The parent questionnaire was designed after a thorough review of the literature, looking at existing questionnaires focused on families and early development assessments (Zero to Three, 2010; McNaughton, 1994), analyzing community level data, connecting with experts in the field, and engaging the community. Questions about barriers to care were created using constructs from both The Behavioral Model of Health Services Use (Anderson R. , 1995) and Penchansky's Model of Access (Penchansky & Thomas, 1981). Pulled from Anderson's model, satisfaction and needs were measured, and from Penchansky: availability, accessibility, accommodations, affordability, and acceptability.

The questionnaire took approximately 12 minutes to complete and was constructed using contingency questions, closed-ended questions (including multiple choice and Likert scale), and open-ended questions. In total, the questionnaire consists of 19 total queries with 7 Likert scale questions and 12 open or closed-ended questions. The Likert scale was a 3-point scale looking at preferences from “very helpful” to “not helpful.” The questionnaire asked about satisfaction with social programs from families, use and awareness of services, and the degree different service options would be helpful. The use of Likert scale questions was useful to determine the intensity of parents’ preferences and satisfaction.

### **Survey Procedures**

A paper version of the questionnaire was developed in both English and Spanish (see Appendixes B & C for the paper versions of the questionnaire). The online questionnaire tool, Survey Monkey was also employed. All paper versions were input into the online application for future analysis.

Multiple distribution methods were used to get a sample that was representative of Skagit County families with young children. Convenience and quota sampling was used; participants were contacted through mixed methods including mobile applications, face-to-face interviewing, and online applications, with no restrictions on participation; paper versions of the questionnaire were brought to community events, food banks, and community centers. Partner organizations (see Appendix D for a list of partners organizations) assisted in distributing the questionnaire directly, asking families to fill out the questionnaire, sharing the link, and providing input on outreach efforts. Incentives of books, T-shirts, and museum passes were provided to encourage families to complete the questionnaire. Families were directed to pick up a complementary gift at

one of the six regional libraries. Incentives were used to both encourage participation and drive families to community establishments.

The link to the online questionnaire was posted on popular county Facebook accounts and was emailed using the Skagit County Public Health departments email distribution lists. The questionnaire was completely filled out, with every question answered, by 86 percent of respondents. The majority of questionnaires completed were returned in paper form, with respondents being directly asked to complete the survey. It is estimated the response rate was about 77 percent with 600 individuals being asked to complete the survey. A distribution plan with outreach methods is available (see Appendix E for distribution plan).

### **Analysis**

This was the first time a study has been conducted in Skagit County to analyze the parental perspective. The results, reported here, examine awareness of programs, barriers to services, services requested by parents and methods to connect to families. The data analysis is primarily descriptive. The Skagit County parental survey was analyzed using SPSS software. The data was summarized looking at valid percentages and using frequency analysis. An independent sample T-test was used to compare Library program use and awareness among groups with different incomes. Graphs and tables show percentages and differences in responses based upon income.

### **Results**

#### **Descriptive Statistics for Questionnaire Items**

Four out of the five programs examined had eligibility criteria – three out of five have income eligibility. The data was examined looking at general trends and examining differences in use, barriers and preferences based upon income. Because of small samples, income was

divided into two categories: those with an income above \$40,000 (N=204) and those with an income at or below \$40,000 (N=176). Valid percentages were used in all cases.

### Awareness and Use of Programs

Families were asked a series of questions about their awareness and use of parent groups, home visiting, Library programs, WIC, and Early/Head Start Programs. Figure 2 shows percentage of all respondents. Parent groups and home visiting programs had the highest percentage of respondents unaware of their programs; Library programs had the highest percentage of respondents that had used these programs, WIC and Early/Head Start had the highest percentage of respondents aware of programs but not participating. Of the surveyed population, 47 percent had used Early/Head Start programs.

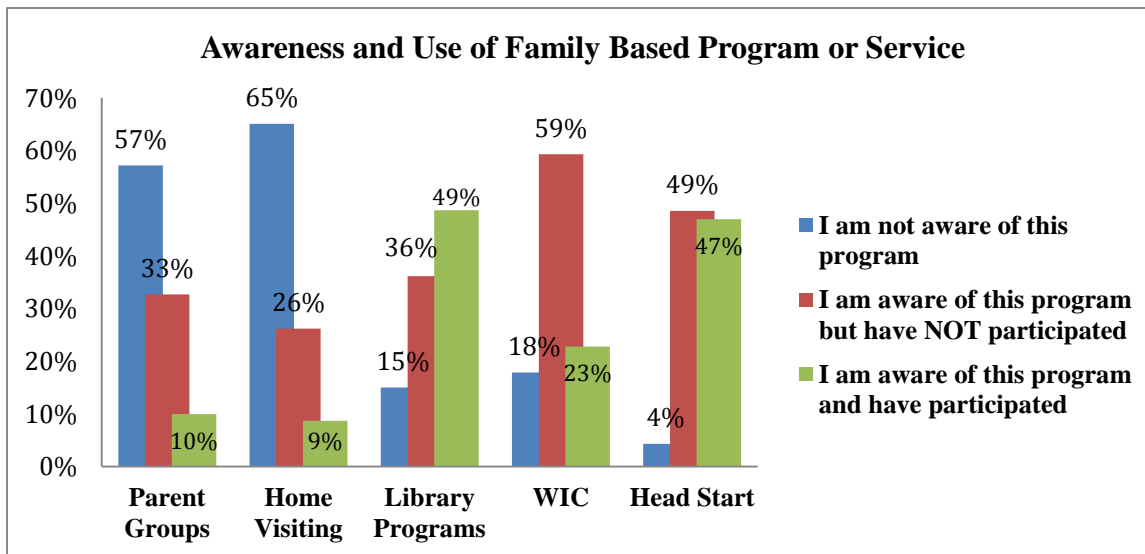


Figure 1. Percentage of respondents' awareness and use of community programs for families from Skagit County Parent Survey

Each program was examined more closely to see the effects of income on participation. Table 3 shows awareness and participation of each program separated by incomes above or below \$40,000 annually. Lower income populations had higher rates of being unaware of three out of the five programs and were 3 times more likely to not know about Library programs.

Four out of the five programs had eligibility criteria for participation; Library programs were the only programs evaluated with no eligibility criteria that were available in every city. Examining the effects of income on participation of Library programs explains the impact of the most accessible programs that we evaluated. A higher mean represents greater use and awareness of programs. The Sig. (2-Tailed) value from the independent T-test is 0.00. With a mean difference of .41. There was a statistically significant difference between awareness and use of Library programs for incomes above and below 40,000. This data shows that income influenced people's use of programs. Higher income populations were more aware and used Library programs significantly more than lower income populations.

Lower income populations participated in greater percentages in three out of the five programs (Early/Head Start, WIC and home visiting), all of which had income based eligibility criteria. Compared to lower income populations, higher income populations used Library programs and parent groups more and had a larger percentage of respondents that were unaware of two out of five programs.

|  | Parent groups |             | Home visiting |             | Library programs |             | WIC          |             | Early/Head Start |             |
|--|---------------|-------------|---------------|-------------|------------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|------------------|-------------|
|  | Under 40,000  | Over 40,000 | Under 40,000  | Over 40,000 | Under 40,000     | Over 40,000 | Under 40,000 | Over 40,000 | Under 40,000     | Over 40,000 |
|  | N=192         | N=214       | N=191         | N=220       | N=190            | N=217       | N=191        | N=217       | N=193            | N=220       |
| I am not aware of this program                       | 59%           | 56%         | 59%           | 69%         | 23%              | 7%          | 18%          | 16%         | 3%               | 5%          |
| I am aware of this program but have NOT participated | 33%           | 33%         | 27%           | 26%         | 42%              | 33%         | 49%          | 70%         | 26%              | 69%         |
| I am aware of this program and have participated     | 8%            | 11%         | 14%           | 5%          | 35%              | 60%         | 33%          | 14%         | 71%              | 25%         |

Table 3. Awareness and use of programs for families broken down by income levels

**Analysis of awareness of programs.** Overall respondents' awareness and use of programs varied by income. Regardless of income, the greatest percentage of survey respondents were unaware of parent groups (59 and 56 percent) and home visiting programs (59 and 69

percent). There was slight difference among income levels about awareness and use of WIC, but the greatest responses from each income group were, aware of WIC but did not use the service (49 and 70 percent). The data on other programs shows deviations in awareness and use based on income. For Library programs, that had no eligibility criteria, lower income populations had lower levels of awareness and use of these programs while higher income populations were more aware of and used these programs more.

The results from this analysis displayed that awareness was impacted by income. In general, based on these findings, community organizations can consider the following suggestions: (1) look to Library programs and Early/Head Start to support outreach efforts; (2) focus on building awareness of home visiting programs, parent groups; (3) focus on efforts to target enabling factors preventing families from using WIC and Library programs.

### **Barriers to Service Use**

Barriers to access were measured through contingency questions. Respondents that were “aware of programs but have not participated” were asked what factor (language, transportation, time, need, or eligibility) prevented them from participating in the specific program.

Figure 2 shows barriers to accessing services for the entire surveyed population. Looking at the graph eligibility, need, and time were the most often cited reason for not using a program.

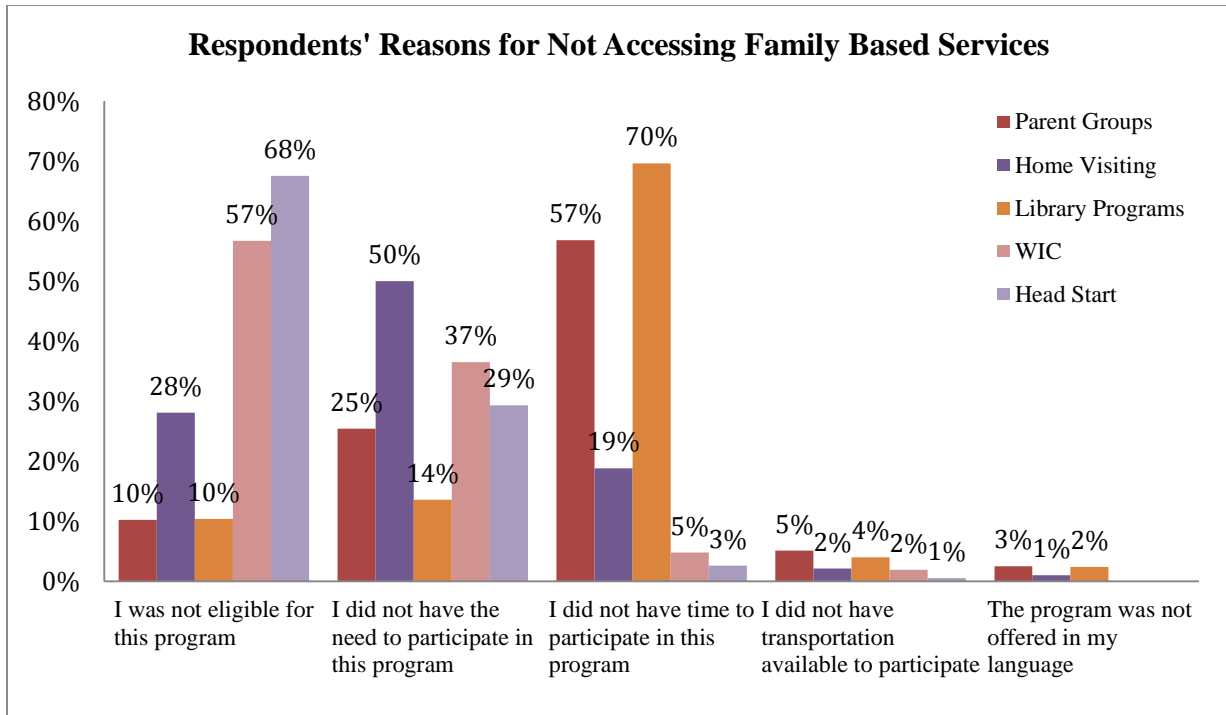


Figure 2. Percentage of families that are aware of programs but do not participate, data from Skagit County Parent Survey. From outside of circle moving in: Early/Head Start (N=191), WIC (N=208), Library (N=125), home visiting (N=96), and parent groups (N=118)

Table 4 shows the distribution of enabling factors separated by income. Families with an annual income at or below \$40,000 more often identified transportation and language as enabling factors. Eligibility was the primary barrier for higher income families. Time and need was a deterrent for both incomes.

|   | Parent groups |         | Home Visiting |         | Library programs |         | WIC     |         | Early/Head Start |         |
|---|---------------|---------|---------------|---------|------------------|---------|---------|---------|------------------|---------|
|   | <40,000       | >40,000 | <40,000       | >40,000 | <40,000          | >40,000 | <40,000 | >40,000 | <40,000          | >40,000 |
|   | N=53          | N=67    | N=47          | N=52    | N=66             | N=65    | N=78    | N=137   | N=46             | N=150   |
| I was not eligible for this program.                    | 8%            | 13%     | 28%           | 33%     | 6%               | 14%     | 49%     | 63%     | 57%              | 72%     |
| I did not have the need to participate in this program. | 26%           | 28%     | 40%           | 58%     | 12%              | 14%     | 38%     | 34%     | 35%              | 27%     |
| I did not have time to participate in this program.     | 53%           | 57%     | 26%           | 10%     | 71%              | 71%     | 9%      | 4%      | 7%               | 1%      |
| I did not have transportation available to              | 8%            | 1%      | 4%            | 0%      | 8%               | 2%      | 4%      | 0%      | 2%               | 0%      |
| The program was not offered in my language.             | 6%            | 0%      | 2%            | 0%      | 3%               | 0%      | 0%      | 0%      | 0%               | 0%      |

Table 4. Enabling factors for individuals with annual income below \$40,000 and above \$40,000, shown in valid percentages

**Analysis of barriers to services.** This study found difference among enabling factors for each program. The largest barriers for families using services were eligibility criteria, perceived need for services and time.

Early/Head Start has the strictest income based eligibility criteria of all of the programs evaluated. WIC services are available for families below 185 percent of the federal poverty line and Early/Head Start is more selective – only families under 130 percent of the federal poverty line are eligible, with priority given to extremely low-income families. Of respondents, 207 had used Early/Head Start and only 99 people had used WIC. Respondents identified eligibility as a primary barrier to accessing WIC. This may be a result of self-selection error and perceived eligibility restriction rather than an actual barrier. The results from this analysis show us that eligibility (both actual and perceived) prevents parents from accessing services.

For both upper and lower income levels, lack of need was the largest factor for not using home visiting programs and was second to eligibility for WIC and Early/Head Start. For programs that had less or no eligibility criteria, time was the greatest factor dissuading parents from use. Within both income levels, 71 percent reported not using Library programs because of lack of time.

In general, lower income populations experienced greater barriers because of accessibility (transportation), acceptability (language) and accommodation (time). Higher income populations reported availability (eligibility) and acceptability (need) to be their greatest barriers. These findings provide useful information to organizations serving families on how to best approach families about programs and alterations they can make to improve programs. Organizations serving families should consider the following: (1) clarifying eligibility criteria in outreach efforts; (2) addressing issues of time constraints by shortening programs, altering times

of programs to fit work schedules, or coupling programs with other activities; and (3) including programs for families with no eligibility criteria. Further studies should examine how to address individuals' perceptions of needs and best ways to address multiple barriers to accessing services.

### **Family Service Preferences**

Using Likert scales, respondents were asked to rank program options as “very helpful,” “somewhat helpful” or “not helpful.” Figure 3 displays percentages of respondents that considered options as “very helpful” or “somewhat helpful.” The graph is a stacked line chart to show the differences between each subgroup. Programmatic priorities were examined for different groups including fathers, mothers, caregivers, individuals with an annual income below \$40,000, individuals with annual income above \$40,000, Spanish speaking, English speaking, people that are unaware of programs, and those that are more aware of programs. People who were “unaware” of programs were defined as people who are unaware or have not used two or more programs. People who “aware” of programs were defined as having used at least one program and being aware of at least four of the programs. Awareness of programs was a useful measure, as four out of five of the programs that were examined had eligibility requirements. All parents ranked more community programs and activities for families as their top choice and playgroups as their second or third choice. On average, the surveyed population felt that help with personal relationships and help with child's behavior issues would be less helpful.

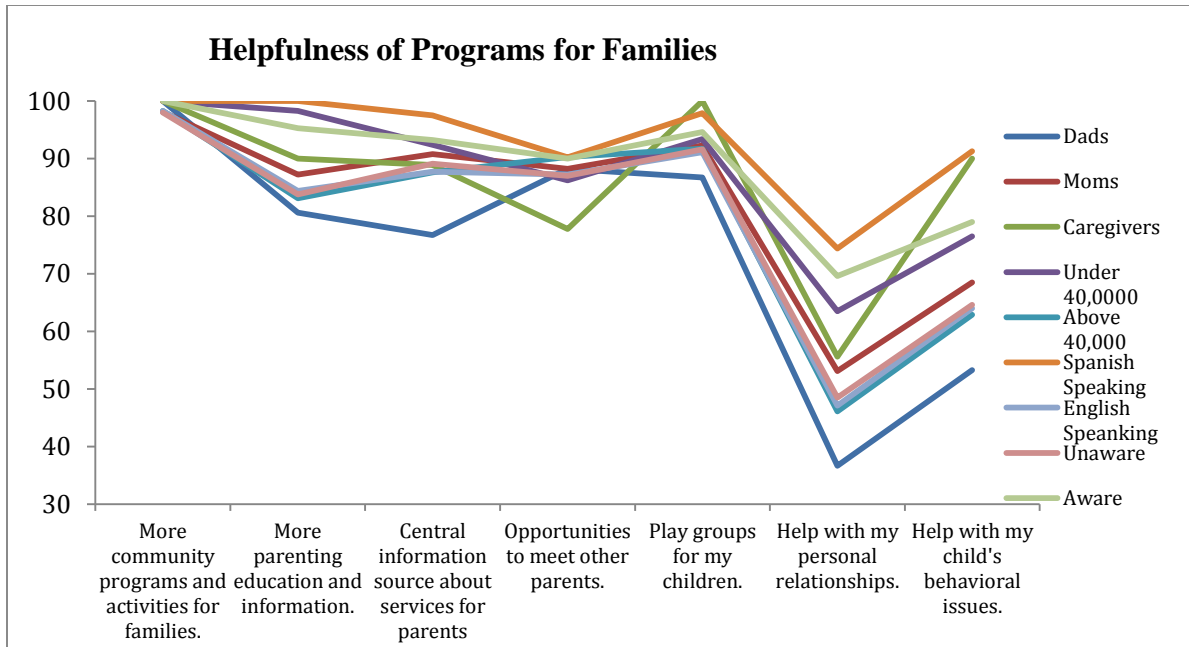


Figure 3. Percentage of respondents that identified programs as "very helpful" or "somewhat helpful" from Skagit County Parent Survey. Looking at Dads (N=32), Moms (322), Caregivers (N=12), annual income below \$40,000 (N=176), annual income above \$40,000 (N=204), Spanish speaking (N=51), English speaking (N=295), Unaware of Services (N=281), and Aware of Services (N=134)

Table 5 displays the responses from all populations examined. More community programs and activities for families was identified as “somewhat helpful” and “very helpful” by the largest percentage of respondents for each subgroup analyzed.

|                                     | Dads | Moms  | Caregivers | <\$40,000 | >\$40,000 | Spanish Speaking | English Speaking | Unaware of Services | Aware of Services |
|-------------------------------------|------|-------|------------|-----------|-----------|------------------|------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
|                                     | N=32 | N=322 | N=12       | N=176     | N=204     | N=51             | N=295            | N=281               | N=134             |
| Community programs and activities   | 100% | 98%   | 100%       | 100%      | 98%       | 100%             | 98%              | 98%                 | 100%              |
| Parenting education and information | 81%  | 87%   | 90%        | 98%       | 83%       | 100%             | 84%              | 84%                 | 95%               |
| Central information source          | 77%  | 91%   | 89%        | 92%       | 88%       | 98%              | 88%              | 89%                 | 93%               |
| Opportunities to meet other parents | 88%  | 88%   | 78%        | 86%       | 90%       | 90%              | 87%              | 87%                 | 90%               |
| Play groups                         | 87%  | 92%   | 100%       | 93%       | 92%       | 98%              | 91%              | 92%                 | 95%               |
| Help with personal relationships    | 37%  | 53%   | 56%        | 64%       | 46%       | 74%              | 47%              | 49%                 | 70%               |
| Help with child's behavioral issues | 53%  | 69%   | 90%        | 77%       | 63%       | 91%              | 64%              | 65%                 | 79%               |

Table 5. Survey responses for community programs that would be ‘very helpful’ and ‘somewhat helpful’ to parents

**Analysis of family service preferences.** The Skagit County Parent Survey also examined parents’ preferences for programs and activities. More community programs and activities for

families was identified as the greatest priority of each subgroup examined (fathers, mothers, caregivers, individuals with an annual income below \$40,000, individuals with annual income above \$40,000, Spanish speaking, English speaking, people that are unaware of programs, and those that are more aware of programs) and each subgroup ranked playgroups as either a second or third priority. More parenting education and information was one of the top preferences for caregivers, families with an annual income under \$40,000, Spanish Speakers, and those who often used programs. A central information source about services for parents had the second or third highest percentage of respondents from the subgroups of mothers, caregivers, Spanish speakers, English speakers and those that are unaware of programs. Opportunities to meet other parents was the second greatest priority for fathers and third for with incomes over \$40,000 annually.

These findings show that regardless of income, every subgroup identified more community programs for families and playgroups as helpful, with different subgroups having slightly different priorities. More marginalized populations that may have less access to other resources, were more interested in parenting education or social opportunities. Individuals that have more access and choice were interested in how to navigate available resources and would like a better system for learning about programs and activities. Organizations serving families should consider: (1) increasing community programs and activities for families; (2) increasing playgroups; (3) targeting parenting education classes for marginalized populations; and (4) providing opportunities for males and caregivers to meet other parents. Further research is needed to examine what systems families would prefer for a central information source about services.

## Methods to Connect to Families

Survey participants were asked what communication methods they used and would prefer to use to learn about activities for families. Figure 4 shows that most individuals were currently using social media, websites and family and friends.

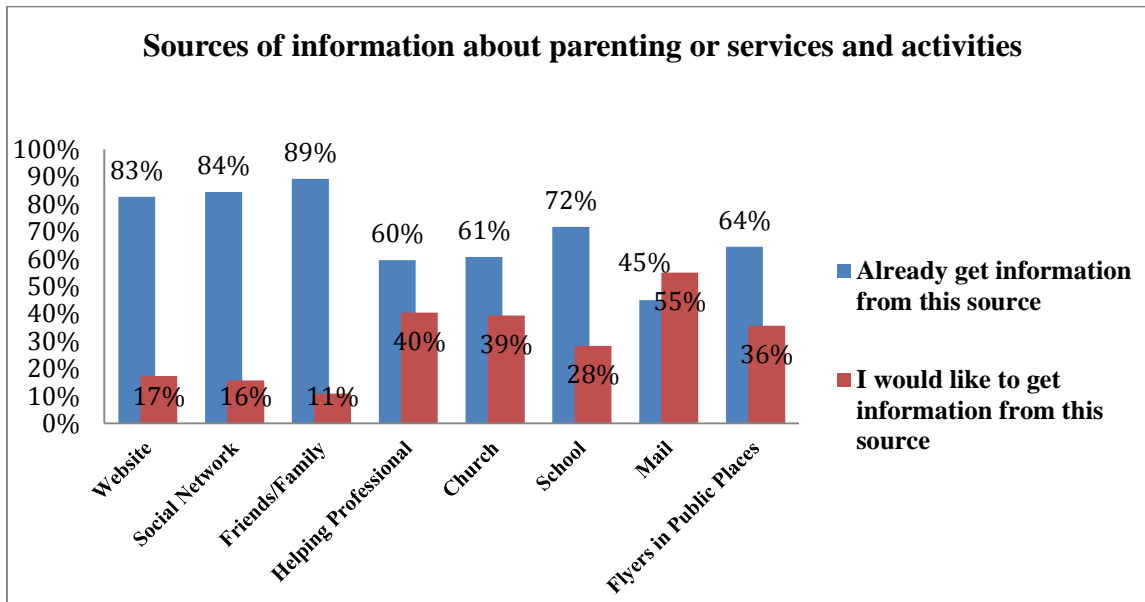


Figure 4. Percentage of respondents that identified where they receive information on parenting or services and activities for families in the community from Skagit County Parent Survey

Table 6 displays a comparison between responses from individuals with different income and what methods of communication they preferred. Regardless of income, family/friends, social networks and websites were the main methods of preferred communication for parents. Though families received information from multiple sources and schools, flyers in public and helping professionals provided substantial information to parents. Higher income parents relied on churches for information at a slightly higher frequency than lower income populations.

|  | Websites |         | Social networks (e.g., |         | Friends & Family |         | Helping professionals |         | Church  |         | School  |         | Flyers in public places |         | Mail    |         |
|--|----------|---------|------------------------|---------|------------------|---------|-----------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|-------------------------|---------|---------|---------|
|  | <40,000  | >40,000 | <40,000                | >40,000 | <40,000          | >40,000 | <40,000               | >40,000 | <40,000 | >40,000 | <40,000 | >40,000 | <40,000                 | >40,000 | <40,000 | >40,000 |
|  | N=127    | N=183   | N=106                  | N=158   | N=122            | N=168   | N=87                  | N=93    | N=72    | N=82    | N=109   | N=130   | N=87                    | N=109   | N=68    | N=84    |
| Already get information from this source         | 80%      | 85%     | 83%                    | 85%     | 87%              | 92%     | 62%                   | 62%     | 54%     | 71%     | 70%     | 78%     | 63%                     | 65%     | 41%     | 50%     |
| I would like to get information from this source | 20%      | 15%     | 17%                    | 15%     | 13%              | 8%      | 38%                   | 38%     | 46%     | 29%     | 30%     | 22%     | 37%                     | 35%     | 59%     | 50%     |

Table 6. Percentage break down of where people get and would like to get information about parenting, using valid percentages

**Analysis of methods to connect to families.** The questionnaire asked respondents what methods they were currently using to learn about information regarding parenting and resources in the community and what methods they would like to use. The purpose of this question was to learn how community organizations could improve communication with families and the best methods for outreach. The study showed that regardless of income, parents used websites and social media more than friends and families to learn about parenting resources. The data showed that families were using multiple methods to learn about parenting resources and there are opportunities to better connect to families. This piecemeal communication system may influence the lack of awareness of programs in the community. Community organizations serving families can improve communication with families by: (1) using websites and social media to connect to families; (2) using social networks of friends and families for outreach (some suggestions include: hosting house parties or playgroups, encouraging parents to bring friends to playgroups, or offering coupons); and (3) work with helping professionals and churches to inform families. Further research is needed to understand what platform would work best for families and what methods families would prefer.

## Discussion

The Skagit Parent questionnaire and subsequential analysis can provide organizations serving families useful insight about families' preferences and needs. Families reported there was a need for more community activities and programs. For many of the programs examined

the majority of respondents were unaware of programs or not using services. Parents of different incomes had different awareness and use of programs. For many families eligibility, need, and time were the greater barrier to accessing programs. Families reported using, and wanting to use, multiple methods to learn about community programs.

Coordinating efforts to support families takes time, energy and resources at multiple levels (Wallen & Hubbard, 2013). At the time of research, Skagit County had considerable social networks that linked community members, services organizations, schools and providers. Acknowledging the importance of family's perspectives in developing programs for families (Bailey & Simeonsson, 1988), this survey was part of larger community efforts to better understand how to best engage families and incorporate their perspectives. Success in supporting families and children takes developing strong social networks that link multiple stakeholders, including families, under the common mission to address the needs of families in the community (Benard, 2011; Bailey & Simeonsson, 1988).

Community organizations serve a vital role in supporting families (Hall, Porter, Longhu, Becker-Green, & Dreyfus, 2012; Forrest & Riley, 2004). Early development programs encourage healthy emotional-behavior and cognitive development (Anderson, et al., 2003) and strengthening social bonds (Benard, 2011). Research supports that increasing community capacity can reduce impacts of ACEs (Hall, Porter, Longhu, Becker-Green, & Dreyfus, 2012) and effective support can reinforce social bonds between family members and community members (Benard, 2011).

Lower income families were less aware of programs and only used two out of the five programs more than higher income populations, though the majority of programs examined were designed to support lower income populations. Health outcomes and healthy development are

influenced by a multitude of factors, including poverty. Growing up in poverty has been shown to have a negative effect on development and educational outcomes (Engle & Black, 2008).

Lower income families face multiple barriers to accessing support services and are less aware of programs. The challenge for community organizations, is developing programs that support all families while acknowledging that lower income families experience intersecting and different barriers to use. Regardless of demographics, the families surveyed wanted more community programs and activities.

Future research is needed in order to more deeply understand the issues and interests raised by this analysis. Research is needed to understand the communication system capacity of organizations and how to prioritize parents' interest in multiple communication pathways. Large percentages of families cited not needing programs as a reason for not accessing services; further research is needed to explore parents' perceptions of needs. Four out of the five programs examined, had eligibility criteria based upon income, further research is needed to understand how families and organizations are being impacted by eligibility restrictions.

This survey was the first step in using the current social networks of the community to engage families and deepen the connections with families. Some of the unanswered questions mentioned above could be addressed through incorporating this questionnaire into annual data collection. In addition, continual engagement of parents will allow community organizations to learn from and adapt to families' needs. In addition to the analysis presented here, a theory of change was developed to serve organizations as a planning guide and visualization tool that incorporates suggestions and findings from this report (see Appendix F for theory of change model). The Skagit Parent Survey is being used by coalitions supporting families to set priorities

for the community and there is momentum and effort to ensure this assessment will be continued into the future with the potential for expansion.

### **Implications for Practice**

At the time of writing this report, Northwest Educational Service District (NWESD) is partnering with the early learning representatives of the five surrounding counties of Whatcom, Skagit, Island, San Juan, and Snohomish to develop a parent survey to be administered by school districts. They used the Skagit Parent Survey that was developed for the analysis presented here and school surveys to develop a survey that both school districts and early learning advocates will support. The data from these surveys will be collected annually and be analyzed by NWESD staff. The continuation of the Parent Survey will assist organizations serving families to adjust programs to meet families' needs and give parents a voice in the programs available.

### **Human Subject Protection Statement**

The University of Washington Institutional Review Board (IRB) approved this study (see Appendix G for IRB assessment letter).

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## **Appendix A: Program Descriptions**

### **Library programs**

Library programs focus on the interaction between parents and children. Parents and children participate in a variety of educational activities to build early literacy skills. Programs are free and open to all community members with a library card.

### **Early Head Start**

Early Head Start provides services to expectant mothers, infants and toddlers up to age three years. Enrollment is prioritized for families whose income is at or below 100 percent of the Federal Poverty Guidelines. In addition to child development, Head Start also focuses on parent involvement, family partnerships, health, safety and nutrition. Programs offer classroom or home visits or a combination of both.

### **Head Start**

Head Start provides services to children age three to five years and their families. Enrollment is prioritized for families whose income is at or below 100 percent of the Federal Poverty Guidelines. In addition to specializing in child development, Head Start also focuses on parent involvement, family partnerships, health, safety and nutrition. Programs offer classroom visits, home visits or a combination of both.

### **Home visiting programs (Nurse Family Partnership)**

Provides services to low-income, first-time parents to help them have healthy pregnancies, learn how to take good care of their babies and make plans for the future. Registered nurses provide home visits to first-time pregnant mothers who are predisposed to infant health and developmental problems. NFP is designed for pregnant women who are first-time mothers; enroll by the 28th week of pregnancy; and participate in the program until their child is two years of age.

### **Women, Infant and Children (WIC) Nutrition Program**

WIC provides services to pregnant, breastfeeding and postpartum women and children under age five. A family of four may earn up to \$44,123 and be income- eligible for WIC.

Services include: Nutrition education and counseling , Breastfeeding information and support , Referrals to health care and community services , Checks/vouchers for the purchase of healthy food

**Appendix B: Skagit County Parent Survey (English Version)**



***Skagit Parent Survey for children age 5 and under***



**General info**

**Are you a:**             Mother/Step-mother       Father/Step-father             Caregiver

**How many children do you have in each of the following age categories (please check)**

|                | <b>1</b> | <b>2</b> | <b>3</b> | <b>4</b> | <b>5</b> |
|----------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Less than 1 yr |          |          |          |          |          |
| 1-2 yrs        |          |          |          |          |          |
| 3-5 yrs        |          |          |          |          |          |
| 6 yrs or older |          |          |          |          |          |

**In the past week, what childcare services did you use for your child under age 5?**

|                            | <b>Never</b> | <b>Less than 1 day</b> | <b>1-3 days</b> | <b>4-5 days</b> | <b>6-7 days</b> |
|----------------------------|--------------|------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Family members             |              |                        |                 |                 |                 |
| Friends                    |              |                        |                 |                 |                 |
| Babysitter/nanny           |              |                        |                 |                 |                 |
| Licensed family home care  |              |                        |                 |                 |                 |
| Licensed child care center |              |                        |                 |                 |                 |

**Experience with local activities/services**

**For each of the programs below, indicate your awareness/use of the program or service.**

**1. Parent groups**

- I am not aware of local parent groups
- I am aware of local parent groups, but do/did not participate because:
  - Not eligible
  - No transportation
  - No need to participate
  - Not available in my language
  - Not enough time
  - Other
- I am aware of local parent groups and have participated. These groups are/were:
  - Very helpful
  - Kind of helpful
  - Not so helpful

**Please comment on what you liked most and/or least about parent groups (list groups)**

**2. Home visiting/individualized parent support services**

- I am not aware of local home visiting/individualized parent support services
- I am aware of local home visiting/individualized parent support services, but do/did not participate because:
  - Not eligible
  - No transportation
  - No need to participate
  - Not available in my language
  - Not enough time
  - Other

- I have participated in home visiting/individualized parent support services. Services are/were:
  - Very helpful
  - Kind of helpful
  - Not so helpful

**Please comment on what you liked most and/or least about these services (list programs)**

**3. Library activities**

- I am not aware of local library activities.
- I am aware of local library activities, but do/did not participate because:
  - Not eligible
  - No need to participate
  - Not enough time
  - No transportation
  - Not available in my language
  - Other
- I have participated in local library activities. These activities are/were:
  - Very helpful
  - Kind of helpful
  - Not so helpful

**Please comment on what you liked most and/or least about library activities (list activities)**

**4. WIC Nutrition Program**

- I am not aware of WIC.
- I am aware of WIC, but do/did not participate because:
  - Not eligible
  - No need to participate
  - Not enough time
  - No transportation
  - Not available in my language
  - Other
- I have participated in WIC. This program is/was:
  - Very helpful
  - Kind of helpful
  - Not so helpful

**Please comment on what you liked most and/or least about WIC**

**5. Head Start/Early Head Start**

- I am not aware of Head Start/Early Head Start.
- I am aware of Head Start/Early Head Start, but do/did not participate because:
  - Not eligible
  - No need to participate
  - Not enough time
  - No transportation
  - Not available in my language
  - Other
- I have participated in Head Start/Early Head Start. This program is/was:
  - Very helpful
  - Kind of helpful
  - Not so helpful

**Please comment on what you liked most and/or least about Head Start/Early Head Start (please list which program)**

## *Halfway there!* 😊

### Availability/Need for Programs and Services

**Do you feel there are enough activities in Skagit County for families with young children?**

- Yes, I can always find activities I am interested in for my children
- Sometimes I can find activities I am interested in, but not always
- No, there are not enough activities I am interested in for my children

**To what degree would each of the following be helpful to you as a parent?**

|   | Very helpful | Somewhat helpful | Not helpful |
|---|--------------|------------------|-------------|
| More community programs and activities for families   |              |                  |             |
| More parenting education and information              |              |                  |             |
| Central information source about services for parents |              |                  |             |
| Opportunities to meet other parents                   |              |                  |             |
| Playgroups for my child(ren)                          |              |                  |             |
| Help with my personal relationships                   |              |                  |             |
| Help with my child's behavioral issues                |              |                  |             |

**Please describe any other programs, services, or activities that would be helpful for you as a parent**

### Information Sources

**Where do you get information about parenting or services/activities for your family?**

|                                 | Get info here | Would like to get info from here | Comments/<br>specific sources? |
|---------------------------------|---------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Websites                        |               |                                  |                                |
| Social networks (e.g. Facebook) |               |                                  |                                |
| Friends/family                  |               |                                  |                                |
| Helping professionals           |               |                                  |                                |
| Church                          |               |                                  |                                |
| School                          |               |                                  |                                |

|                         |  |  |  |
|-------------------------|--|--|--|
| Flyers in public places |  |  |  |
| Mail                    |  |  |  |
| Other                   |  |  |  |

***Almost done! 😊***

## Demographic info

### Which school district do you live in?

- Anacortes
- Burlington-Edison
- Concrete
- Conway
- La Conner
- Mount Vernon
- Sedro-Woolley
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

### What is your age?

- Under 18
- 19-24
- 25-34
- 35 or older

### How many adults live in your home and share child care/parenting responsibilities with you?

- 1 (only me)
- 2
- 3 or more

### Race/Ethnicity (please check all that apply)

- African American
- Asian/Pacific Islander
- Caucasian
- Hispanic/Latino
- Native American/Alaska Native
- Multiracial
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

### Primary Language spoken at home (please check all that apply)

- English
- Spanish
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

### Education

- Have not completed high school/GED
- Completed high school/GED
- Attended college, but no degree
- Earned a college degree

### Annual family income

- Less than \$20,000
- \$20,000 – 39,000
- \$40,000 – 59,000
- \$60,000 or more

### What is your main method of transportation?

- Car
- Bus
- Bicycle
- Walking
- Other



***Thank you SO VERY MUCH for your time!***

This information will help the Children's Council and the United Way plan for how to make Skagit County an even better place to raise young children!

Thank you for completing our survey!  
Go to your local library to get a children's book or t-shirt as a token  
of our thanks (while supplies last)

**Appendix C: Skagit County Parent Survey (Spanish Version)**



**Encuesta para los padres de niños de 5 años y menores**

**de Skagit**

**Información general**

Relación con el niño:

- Madre o madrastra       Padre o padrastro       Cuidador

**¿Cuántos niños tiene dentro de las siguientes categorías? (marque las celdas correspondientes)**

|                 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|-----------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| Menos de 1 año  |   |   |   |   |   |
| De 1 a 2 años   |   |   |   |   |   |
| De 3 a 5 años   |   |   |   |   |   |
| De 6 años o más |   |   |   |   |   |

**En la última semana, ¿qué recursos usó para cuidar a sus hijos menores de 5 años?**

|  | Nunca | Menos de 1 día | De 1 a 3 días | De 4 a 5 días | De 6 a 7 días |
|--|-------|----------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Familiares                                       |       |                |               |               |               |
| Amigos   |       |                |               |               |               |
| Niñera   |       |                |               |               |               |
| Cuidado infantil familiar autorizado en el hogar |       |                |               |               |               |
| Guardería autorizada                             |       |                |               |               |               |

**Experiencia con actividades y servicios locales**

**Indique su nivel de conocimientos y uso de cada uno de los siguientes programas o servicios.**

**6. Grupos de padres**

- No conozco los grupos locales de padres
- Conozco los grupos locales de padres, pero no he participado en ninguno porque:
  - No reúno los requisitos
  - No tengo un medio de transporte
  - No necesito participar
  - No están disponibles en mi idioma
  - No tengo tiempo suficiente
  - Otro
- He participado en grupos locales de padres. Estos grupos son:
  - Muy útiles
  - Algo útiles
  - No muy útiles

**Escriba lo que más le gustó o lo que menos le gustó de los grupos de padres (incluya los nombres de los grupos)**

**7. Servicios de apoyo en el hogar o individualizados para padres**

- No conozco los servicios de apoyo en el hogar o individualizados para padres
- Conozco los servicios de apoyo en el hogar o individualizados para padres, pero no he usado ninguno porque:
  - No reúno los requisitos
  - No necesito participar

- No tengo tiempo suficiente
- No tengo un medio de transporte
- No están disponibles en mi idioma
- Otro
- He usado servicios de apoyo en el hogar o individualizados para padres. Estos servicios son:
  - Muy útiles
  - Algo útiles
  - No muy útiles

**Escriba lo que más le gustó o lo que menos le gustó de estos servicios (incluya los nombres de los servicios)**

**8. Actividades de la biblioteca**

- No conozco las actividades de la biblioteca local
- Conozco las actividades de la biblioteca local, pero no he participado en ninguna porque:
  - No reúno los requisitos
  - No necesito participar
  - No tengo tiempo suficiente
  - No tengo un medio de transporte
  - No están disponibles en mi idioma
  - Otro
- He participado en actividades de la biblioteca local. Estas actividades son:
  - Muy útiles
  - Algo útiles
  - No muy útiles

**Escriba lo que más le gustó o lo que menos le gustó de las actividades de la biblioteca (incluya los nombres de las actividades)**

**9. Programa de Nutrición de Mujeres, Bebés y Niños (WIC, por sus siglas en inglés)**

- No conozco el WIC
- Conozco el WIC, pero no he participado en él porque:
  - No reúno los requisitos
  - No necesito participar
  - No tengo tiempo suficiente
  - No tengo un medio de transporte
  - No está disponible en mi idioma
  - Otro
- He participado en el WIC. Este programa es:
  - Muy útil
  - Algo útil
  - No muy útil

**Escriba lo que más le gusto o lo que menos le gustó del WIC**

**10. Programas de preescolar, Head Start o Early Head Start**

- No conozco los programas de preescolar o Head Start
- Conozco los programas de preescolar o Head Start, pero no he participado en ninguno porque:
  - No reúno los requisitos
  - No necesito participar
  - No tengo tiempo suficiente
  - No tengo un medio de transporte
  - No están disponibles en mi idioma
  - Otro
- He participado en el programa de preescolar o Head Start. Este programa es:
  - Muy útil
  - Algo útil
  - No muy útil

Escriba lo que más le gustó o lo que menos le gustó del programa de preescolar o Head Start (incluya el nombre del programa)

***¡Ya lleva la mitad! 😊***

**Disponibilidad y necesidad de programas y servicios**

**¿Considera que hay actividades suficientes en el condado de Skagit para las familias con niños pequeños?**

- Sí, siempre encuentro actividades que me interesan para mis hijos
- Algunas veces encuentro actividades que me interesan, pero no siempre
- No, no hay actividades suficientes que me interesen para mis hijos

**¿En qué grado sería útil para usted como padre cada uno de los siguientes?**

|  | Muy útil | Algo útil | Inútil |
|--|----------|-----------|--------|
| Más programas y actividades comunitarios para las familias |          |           |        |
| Más educación e información para padres                    |          |           |        |
| Fuente central de información sobre servicios para padres  |          |           |        |
| Oportunidades para conocer otros padres                    |          |           |        |
| Grupos de juego para mis hijos                             |          |           |        |
| Ayuda con mis relaciones personales                        |          |           |        |
| Ayuda con los problemas de comportamiento de mis hijos     |          |           |        |

**Describe cualquier otro programa, servicio o actividad que sería útil para usted como padre**

**Fuentes de información**

**¿Dónde obtiene la información sobre cómo ser un buen padre, o sobre servicios y actividades para su familia?**

|  | Obtengo información de ahí | Me gustaría obtener información de ahí | ¿Comentarios o fuentes específicas? |
|--|----------------------------|--|-------------------------------------|
|  |                            |  |                                     |

|                                 |  |  |  |
|---------------------------------|--|--|--|
| Sitios web                      |  |  |  |
| Redes sociales (como Facebook)  |  |  |  |
| Amigos o familiares             |  |  |  |
| Profesionales que brindan ayuda |  |  |  |
| La iglesia                      |  |  |  |
| La escuela                      |  |  |  |
| Folletos en lugares públicos    |  |  |  |
| Por correo                      |  |  |  |
| Otros                           |  |  |  |

***¡Ya casi termina! 😊***

## Información demográfica

### ¿En qué distrito escolar vive?

- Anacortes
- Burlington-Edison
- Concrete
- Conway
- La Conner
- Mount Vernon
- Sedro-Woolley
- Otro \_\_\_\_\_

### ¿Cuántos años tiene?

- Menos de 18
- De 19 a 24
- De 25 a 34
- 35 o más

### ¿Cuántos adultos viven en su hogar y comparten con usted las responsabilidades de cuidar o criar a sus hijos?

- 1 (sólo yo)
- 2
- 3 o más

### Raza/etnia (marque todas las opciones que correspondan)

- Afroestadounidense
- Asiático o isleño del Pacífico
- Caucásico
- Hispánico o latino
- Nativo de los Estados Unidos o de Alaska
- Multirracial
- Otra \_\_\_\_\_

### Idioma principal que se habla en casa (marque todas las opciones que correspondan)

- Inglés
- Español
- Otro \_\_\_\_\_

### Educación

- No terminé la preparatoria o equivalente
- Terminé la preparatoria o equivalente
- Fui a la universidad, pero no tengo un grado
- Tengo un grado universitario

### Ingreso familiar anual

- Menos de \$20,000
- Entre \$20,000 y \$39,000
- Entre \$40,000 y \$59,000
- \$60,000 o más

### ¿Cuál es su medio de transporte principal?

- Automóvil
- Autobús
- Bicicleta
- Caminar
- Otro



***¡MUCHAS gracias por su tiempo!***

Esta información ayudará a Children's Council y al plan United Way a saber cómo hacer del condado de Skagit un lugar aún mejor para criar a los niños.

¡Gracias por responder esta encuesta!  
Vaya a la biblioteca local y reciba una playera o un libro para niños como muestra de nuestro agradecimiento (hasta agotar existencias).

## Appendix D: Community Organizations

| Primary Organization     | Support Organization  | Community organizations         |
|--------------------------|---|---------------------------------|
| SPARC                    | United Way  | Parent Child Assistance Program |
| WIC                      | Public health department  | Within Reach                    |
| Head Start               | WA St. Migrant Council  | Thriving heart                  |
| Libraries                | Skagit Kid insider  | Parent to Parent Partnership    |
| SVC family life          | Seamar  | Children development center     |
| Nurse Family Partnership | Community Action<br>Catholic Community<br>Housing<br>Skagit County Child and<br>Family Consortium |                                 |

Organizational Support. *Primary organizations* assist in survey dissemination and directly asking parents to complete survey, *Support Organizations* are organizations that facilitate coalition work and are trusted, key messengers in the community, *Community Organizations* are organizations that are supporting other organizations (they may not be located in Skagit)

## Appendix E: Distribution and Outreach Plan

| Target Groups   | Method   | Locations   |
|---|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People who already use or know about services:</li> <li>• Proficient in English</li> </ul>                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Online</li> <li>• Emails</li> <li>• Directly asking people to take the survey</li> </ul>                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public health Facebook</li> <li>• Skagit Kids Insider</li> <li>• Email to supporting organizations</li> <li>• Direct email parents</li> <li>• Libraries</li> <li>• Supporting Organizations</li> <li>• Events for families</li> <li>• Preschools/child care</li> </ul> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People who already use services or know about services:</li> <li>• English as a second language</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assisting in filling out the application:</li> <li>• Help with language or internet use (electronic or paper copy)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Email to supporting organizations</li> <li>• Direct email parents</li> <li>• Libraries</li> <li>• Museum</li> <li>• Supporting organizations</li> <li>• Community events</li> <li>• Preschools/child care</li> </ul>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People who do not currently use community resources</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Directly ask people to take the survey</li> <li>• Provide informational flyer</li> </ul>                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preschools/child care</li> <li>• Food Banks</li> <li>• Churches</li> <li>• Community events</li> </ul>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dads</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Directly ask people to take the survey</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community Events</li> </ul>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Latino/Latina</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Directly ask people to take the survey</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seamar</li> <li>• Catholic Community Housing</li> <li>• Food Banks</li> </ul>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Native Americans</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Directly ask people to take the survey</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Samish, Swinomish and Upper Skagit Food Banks</li> <li>• Community Events</li> </ul>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Russians</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Directly ask people to take the survey</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Churches</li> <li>• Community Events</li> <li>• Food Banks</li> </ul>  |

Distribution Plan. A plan for reaching target population groups and specific methods and locations of outreach material.

## Appendix F: Theory of Change

### Theory of change

#### Strategies

- Suggested strategies
- Support social networks of families, organizations, schools and providers
  - Incorporate survey tool into annual data collection
  - Expand programs for diverse income families

#### Assumptions

- Providers and organizations are open to change
- All families in Skagit county are of value
- All children deserve the opportunity to lead full lives
- Supporting families is beneficial to the community
- Community providers are committed to the health and wellbeing of families along the entire life course

#### Problems

- Services for families are underutilized
- Continuity of care for families
- Services with eligibility requirements and caps
- Serving rural communities
- Balancing the needs of all families
- Lack of unification of providers and supporting agencies
- Families are disproportionately marginalized due to race, culture and income

#### Community Needs Assessment

- Families can't always find programs that meet their needs
- Families are unaware or ineligible for programs
- Families want to receive more information on services

#### Desired Results

- Experiences with MCH services that are enjoyable, engaging and relevant to the needs of families
- Improved collaboration and communication for MCH service organizations and providers
- Stakeholders, including parents, policy makers, and providers are engaged and committed to MCH.

#### Influential Factors

- Community is gaining awareness of the importance of early development
- Development of coalition with diverse representation
- Successful community wide efforts to inform and engage community of MC health
- Funding availability

## Appendix G: IRB Assessment Letter

PI: Ms. Kathryn DeFilippo, Student, Health Services/Public Affairs

Re: HSD 48818, "Assessing the needs of families with children under five in Skagit county"

Dear Ms. DeFilippo,

The Human Subjects Division received your determination request application on 12/11/2014. Your research activity described in the above-referenced application has been reviewed by Subcommittee EJ.

As outlined in your application, the research activity will only involve the receipt and analysis of data that is not individually identifiable, as the data cannot be linked to specific individuals by the investigators either directly or indirectly through coding systems. Information in your application indicates that:

- (1) The private information or specimens were not collected specifically for the currently proposed research project through an interaction or intervention with living individuals;

*and*

- (2) If the information is coded, the investigators cannot readily ascertain the identity of the individuals to whom the coded private information or specimens pertain because the investigators and the holder of the key have entered into an agreement prohibiting the release of the key to the investigators under any circumstances.

Given this information and the definition of "human subject" under 45 CFR 46.102(f), the research has been determined to not meet the federal regulatory definition of "human subjects research". Therefore, you do not need IRB review and approval to perform your activities. Please keep this memo and a copy of your returned application for your records.

If you have further questions or concerns, feel free to contact me by email at [mth13@uw.edu](mailto:mth13@uw.edu) or by phone at (206) 543-3494.

Sincerely,

Megan Tedell-Hlady, MA  
Review Coordinator, IRB J/EJ  
Human Subjects Division