



Healthy
Peninsula

Healthy Peninsula Early Childhood Community Summit

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Blue Hill Public Library



Early Childhood Community Summit



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Early Childhood Community Summit

HP EC Community Survey

Educators at 9 elementary schools on the Blue Hill Peninsula, Deer Isle and Stonington

- Principals
- Pre Kindergarten (Pre K) through Grade 2
- Special Ed Teachers
- School Counselors

- 54 parents in 8 towns

- Child Development Services (CDS) staff

- **Responses not statistically significant due to small numbers and variations by towns**

- **Good Qualitative data – range of issues and themes to explore**





School Survey Responses

- Screenings – all students are screened by school staff either before Pre K or K with a professional screening tool (DIAL)
- Some children enter school with Individualized Education Programs (IEP) from CDS that qualify them for special education services
 - Speech and language deficits
 - Occupational therapy – sensory modulation or emotional regulation
- Other children can qualify for a Section 504 Behavior Plan
 - Social Emotional issues: Anger management, Anxiety
 - Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)
- **Reasons for and numbers of students with IEP's and 504's vary widely from year to year (up to 50%!)**





School Survey Responses

- Kindergarten Readiness
 - Wide variation in responses from schools
 - 25 – 75% of children “ready” locally
 - No clear national standards
 - Most Pre K and Child Care Centers follow the Maine Early Childhood Learning Guidelines

- Maine Early Childhood Learning Guidelines (rev. March 2015)
<http://www.maine.gov/doe/publicpreschool/documents/Maine-ELDS.pdf>

- “Are schools ready for kids?” (Surry model of pre k home visitation)





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School Survey Responses

- Kindergarten Readiness – Social Skills
 - Able to communicate wants and needs
 - Able to play with others
 - Emotional self-monitoring and regulating – cooperative
 - Able to play and clean up at appropriate times
 - Being able to sit, follow directions, and share respectfully with others

- Kindergarten Readiness – Academic Skills
 - Knowledge of letters and numbers
 - Able to write name
 - Fine motor control

- Family Responsibilities toward Readiness
 - Stability and routines
 - Fed, bathed, and appropriately clothed





School Survey Responses

- Kindergarten Readiness – factors that impact readiness
 - Lack of Quality Child Care
 - “No prior out-of-home opportunity or experience in a group”
 - “If exposed to quality child care, it makes a difference”
 - Lack of exposure to language
 - “Kids not exposed to many language, social, or learning experiences”
 - “TV as babysitter”
 - “Lack of conversational interaction (not about poverty, not income related)”





School Survey Responses

- Kindergarten Readiness
 - Top 3 services to help improve K readiness
 - Quality affordable early child care and education
 - Parent Education
 - Earlier service interventions for delays

“There are more poor kids with issues, but also there are notable exceptions. The real question is how invested are the parents? Not really a question of blue-collar vs. white-collar or divorced vs. two-parent home; it depends on the family and what it offers.”

Elementary School Principal





School Survey Responses

- Special Health Needs/Medical Concerns
 - Common health issues
 - **Asthma**
 - **Obesity**
 - Fatigue(sleep issues very common)
 - Dental issues(caries most common chronic disease)
 - Hearing impairment(often missed)
 - Behavioral Health Issues
 - **Anxiety (insecurity, moodiness, shut down)**
 - **Behavioral issues (impulse, anger control)**
 - Depression (mild degrees with above)
 - Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (ACES)
 - Verbal/Physical Aggression
 - Autism (more than 1/68!?)





School Survey Responses

- **Special Education Services**
 - Speech and Language services are most common
 - Need for Occupational Therapy (hypersensitivity)

- **Reading Appropriately by 3rd Grade**
 - Varied by school – 50 – 70+ %
 - FYI – national average 33 % Maine average 70 %

- **Hunger as a separate issue**
 - All schools have students who qualify for free/reduced lunch – varies 25 – 70% !
 - Most schools have a breakfast program – some children do not have food at home, others do not have time to eat in the morning before coming to school
 - Many children “identify hungry”
 - Some teachers bring in snacks for students
 - Some schools free breakfast, lunch for all





School Survey Responses

- **Needed Additional School Services : “wish list” common across all schools**
 - Extended-day programs (after school programs)
 - Extended-year programs (academic)
 - Occupational therapy (OT) services for sensory issues
 - More Ed Techs for 504 and IEP kids
 - Counselor time increased and able to work more with parents
 - Behavioral Specialist
 - Speech Therapy time increased
 - Literacy/ Reading Specialist
 - Physical Therapy (PT) time increased
 - Nurse time increased





School Survey Responses

- Additional School Services Needed, cont.
 - Better transition from CDS services to school Special Ed services: differential diagnoses and need meetings

- Community Needs (as identified by school staff)
 - Parent Early Child Education awareness
 - Quality day care and pre K programs
 - Support for increased socialization, emotional control
 - Assistance to reduce drug and alcohol abuse
 - After school programs – with activity and snack
 - Change in attitude to value education more





School Survey Responses

- School and Community Assets
 - **All schools noted their reliance on dedicated parent and community volunteers**
 - All schools identified multiple school and community assets other than sports teams
 - Some schools noted a “cultural divide” within their Parent-Teacher Organizations (PTO) with more affluent/educated parents dominating and less affluent/educated parents feeling judged or left out
 - CDS identified their home and school-based services as an asset, as well as their collaboration with child care providers, medical offices, other service agencies





Parent Survey Responses

■ Overview

- Attempts at reaching parents – paper surveys, social media, online survey, only one focus group
- Majority of responses from child care programs, schools, playgroup, physician offices, mutual friends
- Much work left to fully engage parent community – selection bias

■ Demographics

- 54 survey responses
- Average age of children in house hold: 4.8
- Number of children in household: 1–4, most 2–3
- Number of households with 2 parents: 37 (68%..?)
- Number of households with single parents: 4 (selection bias)
- Grandparent raising grandchildren: 1





Parent Survey Responses

■ Support for Raising Children

- 32 parents had the support they needed, 7 did not have support, 9 had some support but not enough

■ **Additional Child Care Options Most Needed**

- Infant care
- Before and after school care
- More activities for younger children
- Several mentioned isolation of young mothers who want contact with other parents through activities (eg infant/parent play groups)

■ Most Trusted Sources of Information

- Healthcare providers – primary care, midwife, chiropractor
- Social services agencies and schools – CDS, teachers, day care providers
- Self-help materials – library books, Facebook
- Social network – friends, family peers





Parent Survey Responses

■ Play Groups

- 44 parents knew of a local play group, 22 attend regularly
- Do not attend? .. due to work, child in preschool, older/younger ages not compatible
- 32 parents like opportunities to meet with other parents for support, friendship, and education..variety ways?..

■ Transportation

- 41 parents have no transportation issues
- 6 parents reported transportation issues can be a barrier to accessing medical or social appointments
- Anecdotally not representative of larger population and parents in poverty who mention transportation as #1 problem for access to programs in other focus groups !





Parent Survey Responses

- Topics of Interest in order of popularity
 - **Positive discipline**
 - **Healthy eating and physical activity**
 - **Honesty and respect**
 - Sleeping issues, separation anxiety
 - Reading with children, learning through play
 - Potty training
 - Kindergarten readiness
 - TV and technology
 - Fears of childhood
 - Dental hygiene
 - Sibling rivalry
 - Self esteem
 - Bullying behavior
 - Communication with teachers and doctors
 - Introducing a new baby, divorce





Parent Survey Responses

- Parent “Personal Wish List”
 - Child care, afterschool programs, camps
 - More full day, quality child care options
 - Extended hours: Early and late hour day care options
 - Financial assistance for after school programs and summer camps for families with multiple children
 - More outdoor summer programs for toddlers
 - Early Childhood Activities
 - Specific types of play groups
 - FB, Social media clearinghouse for kid activities(0–5)
 - Reading circles at town libraries (Blue Hill, Brooksville)
 - Activities or programs for toddlers
 - Positive community events





Parent Survey Responses

- Parent “Personal Wish List”, cont.
 - Early Child Education
 - Opportunities for learning behavioral skills with children
 - Kindergarten readiness preparation for parents
 - Help with issues at schools (K–12), bullying behaviors
 - Developmentally appropriate early childhood programs (more play, movement, and relationship-based care)
 - Communal bus stop
 - Parenting Support and Education
 - Learning to handle bullying, self-esteem issues
 - Getting my child excited to learn
 - Parenting group to discuss challenging issues for families, including how to balance work and family commitments
 - Support for grandparents caring for young children





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Parent Survey Responses

- Parent “Personal Wish List”, cont.
 - Connection to Service Providers
 - Trust in providers to look out for family’s best interest
 - Summer services
 - Special help for kids, including occupational therapy
 - Other
 - Transportation
 - Local pediatricians
 - Less judgment
 - Open communication
 - Fix the Blue Hill playground





Discussion

Action



Summary Ideas For Discussion



- Early Intervention
 - Infant and Toddler Activities
 - Parent Support and Education
- Affordable, Quality Infant and Child Care and Education
- Information Clearinghouse – websites, Facebook
- Afterschool and Summer Activities