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EXPECTATIONS

FORSYTH FAMILY VOICES

2017 SURVEY RESULTS



INTRODUCTION

Forsyth Family Voices (FFV) is a powerful way to engage the voices of parents and families of young children in the programs that serve them—and in the community’s early childhood system.

The FFV approach, using shared survey and focus group tools to listen to and learn from families, was developed collaboratively with a diverse, cross-sector group of agencies representing different fields within the early childhood system. Through FFV, agencies in the Forsyth County early childhood system are collectively building a deeper understanding of the needs, strengths, and ideas of the families they serve. Agencies are able to use FFV data to inform and improve their program planning and service delivery. Additionally, FFV has provided new access to shared data that can inform how all of us in Forsyth County support families across the system.

The Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust invested in FFV as a part of Great Expectations—an initiative that works to ensure that all children living in Forsyth County enter kindergarten ready to learn and leave set for success in school and life. The Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust invested in developing FFV because agencies across the early childhood system expressed a need to hear more from the families they serve. Additionally, the Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust set out to create Great Expectations as an initiative that is rooted in the experience and perspective of low-income families and families of color—groups that often do not have enough opportunity to have their voices heard.

As a part of FFV, 14 agencies have surveyed over 350 families. A first cohort of 13 agencies collected data in the summer of

2016, and those agencies trained a second cohort of 14 agencies to collect data in the summer of 2017. This report includes data from the second cohort of agencies. Additionally, 10 agencies are deepening their family engagement practice together through an FFV Learning Network.

Results from Forsyth Family Voices are providing rich insights from parents. We now know more about parent perspectives and needs—and have a deeper understanding of the opportunities and gaps that exist within the system of early childhood services. The Trust plans to continue this cycle of learning with parents and providers, as there’s much more to explore. This work is a starting point for genuinely engaging families in designing services and for promoting collaboration and data sharing between organizations—we plan to continue to build on this momentum.



Data Collection

Forsyth Family Voices (FFV) employs surveys and focus groups to generate both quantitative and qualitative data about family needs, strengths, and perspectives related to the development and education of their young children. Participating agencies received training on participant recruitment, survey administration, and focus group facilitation in early 2017 from agencies that participated in the first cohort of FFV. Participating agencies in the second cohort used a revised and shortened version of a survey tool that was developed collaboratively in 2016 with the first cohort of FFV agencies and with Nolo Consulting. Agencies who conducted focus groups also used questions that were developed by the first FFV cohort and Nolo Consulting. Finally, some agencies added questions to the survey tool and focus groups, based on the needs of their individual agencies.

Surveys and focus groups were conducted in both English and Spanish. Agencies used a variety of methods to recruit their participants, and they received funding from the Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust to provide incentives and supports to families, such as gift cards, childcare, meals, and small toys and books. Agencies were trained to use one-on-one interviews with agency staff and volunteers to administer the surveys with participants. An interview format was used to ensure that individuals could participate regardless of their literacy level, and to provide an opportunity for agency staff to better get to know the families they serve through conversations prompted by the survey questions. Data was entered into Survey Monkey by

the agencies themselves, or by MDC and Forsyth Futures staff. Agencies also provided audio files of the focus groups to MDC and Forsyth Futures.

Data Analysis

Percentages in this report reflect the participating families; the sample is not large enough to generalize the data to represent the whole county. Demographic information was used to disaggregate responses. For disaggregation by household annual income, \$0-24,999 was considered low-income, \$25,000-49,999 was considered mid-income, and over \$50,000 was considered higher income. These income groups were selected to allow for enough families to be included in each group to perform comparisons; however, these groupings of household income are not backed by research or recognized federally as distinct household income populations. Highlighted notes on important disaggregations, both race/ethnicity and household income, are assessed by identifying statistically significant differences. Likert-scale questions were analyzed using Mann-Whitney U methods at the 95% confidence interval and yes/no questions were analyzed using Chi-square methods at the 95% confidence level.

Data from the focus groups is not included due to inconsistent questions and practices used between groups. Differing questions and methodology between focus group sessions does not lend itself to aggregation and analysis for common themes across focus group sessions.



Demographics



**Parent Involvement
in Education**



Accessing Information



Family Quality of Life



Forsyth County Challenges



Community Services

Parent Involvement

Families place strong importance on and are strongly involved in the areas of building a relationship and communicating regularly with teachers, and supporting education and development activities at and outside the home.

Families say they are not as involved in the areas of volunteering, helping raise money, and participating in parent groups and encouraging other parents.

Families feel that time is the biggest barrier for not being more involved in their child's education.

Accessing Information

Families feel that similar types of communication channels were both effective and not effective ways to communicate with them, suggesting mixed types of communication are essential to reach all families.

Family Quality of Life

Families indicate that their quality of life would be improved if they had more money, better employment opportunities, more continuing education opportunities, and more family time.

Families say the biggest barriers to a higher quality of life include the cost burdens associated with medical and dental services, and paying for rent.

Forsyth County Issues

Families feel that the biggest issues for Forsyth County were low pay, not enough jobs, drug abuse, and domestic violence.

Community Services

Families give generally favorable reviews of early childhood education services.

The majority of families indicate that it was difficult or very difficult to receive free childcare/preschool.

Families indicate that organizations could help improve the quality of life for their families by providing more resources and programs, and improving their marketing.

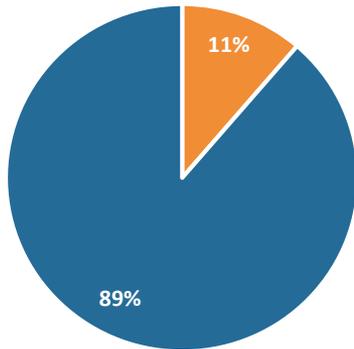
DEMOGRAPHICS

The following section shows the demographics of participating families. Families were chosen by the organizations conducting the surveys, and the agencies were encouraged to recruit a group of families that reflected the diversity of the population they serve.



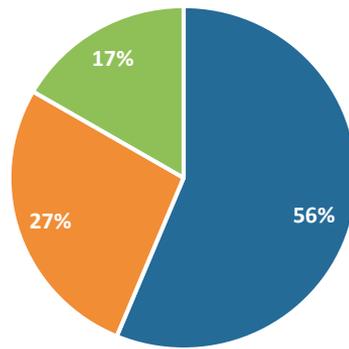
DEMOGRAPHICS

Respondent Sex



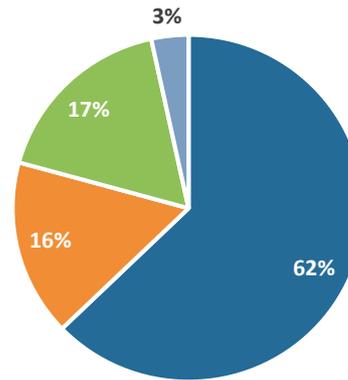
■ Male ■ Female

Household Income



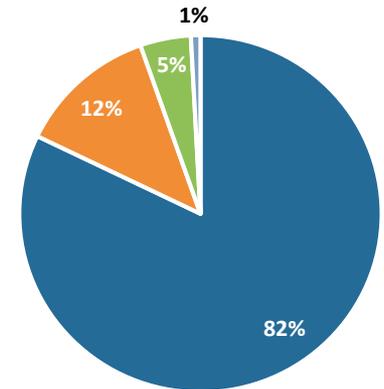
■ Low Income (\$0-\$24,999)
■ Mid-Income (\$25,000-\$49,999)
■ Higher Income (\$50,000 and over)

Respondent Race/Ethnicity



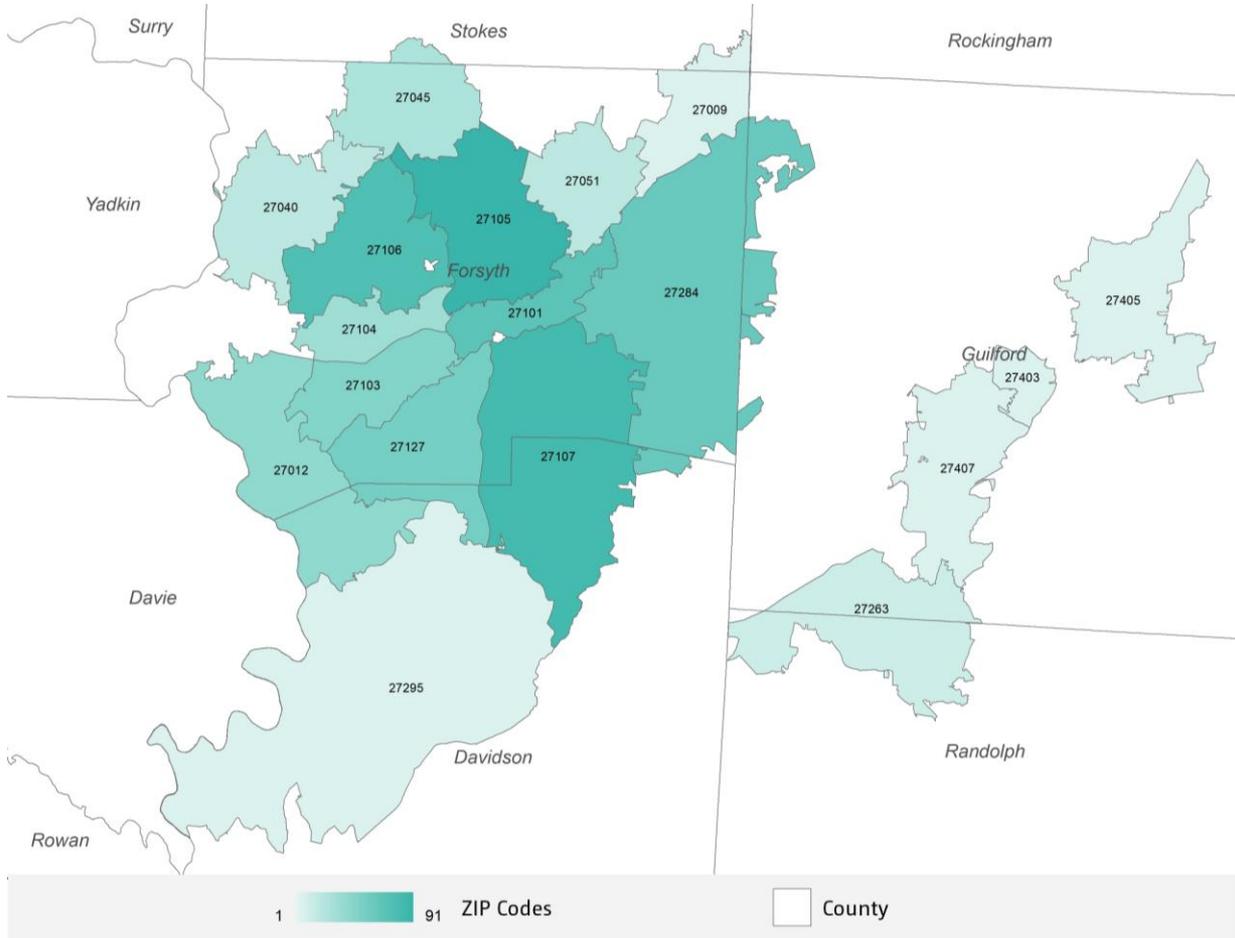
■ Black or African American
■ Hispanic/Latino
■ White / Caucasian
■ Other

Language at Home



■ English
■ Spanish
■ Bilingual
■ Other

Families by Zip Code



* ZIP code 27709 is not represented on this map

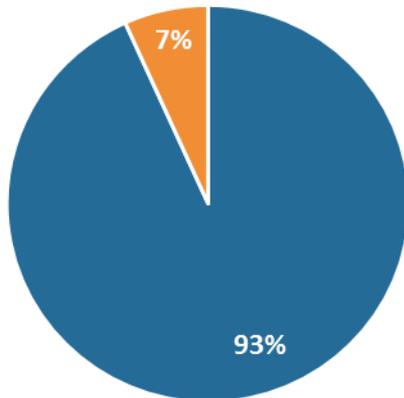
DEMOGRAPHICS

Key Points

Most of the families indicate they have a child under 6 years old and about half have a child over 7 years old.

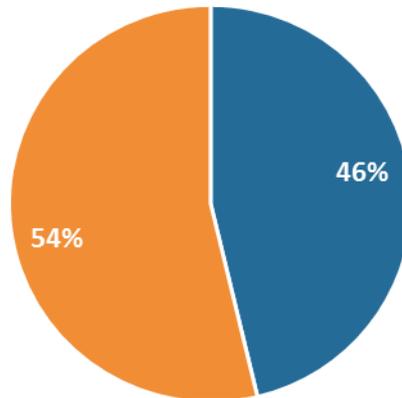
The minority of survey respondents say they are in school, while the majority say they are employed and have a bank or credit union.

Child 6 or Under



■ Yes ■ No

Child 7 or Over



■ Yes ■ No

Enrolled in School



Employment



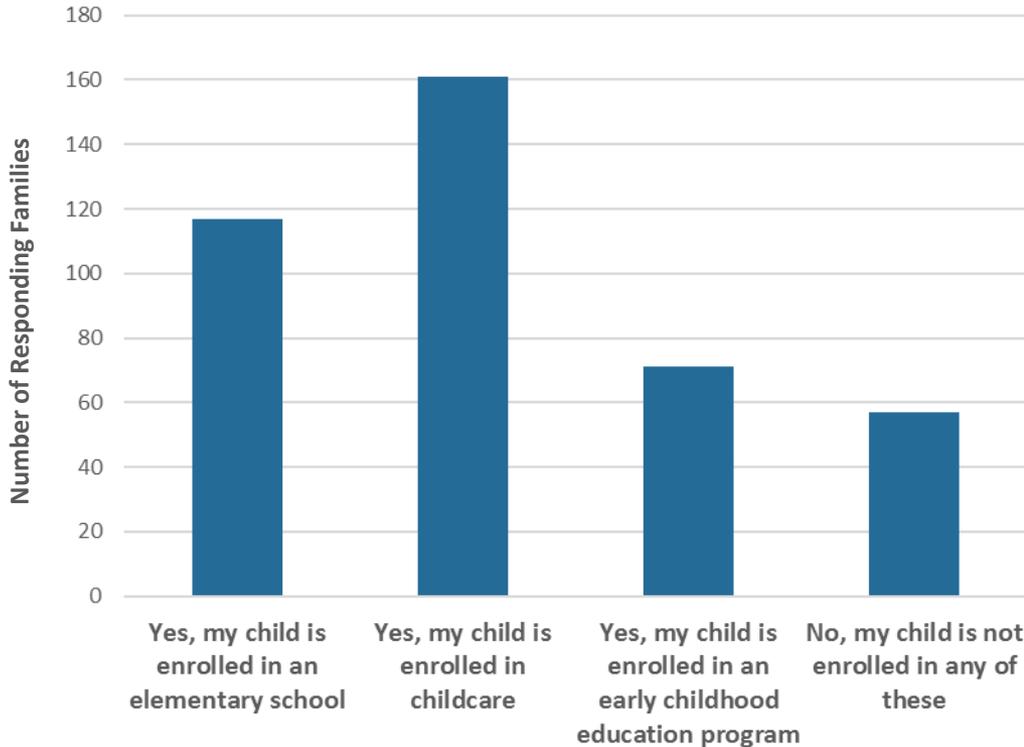
Bank or Credit Union



■ Yes ■ No



Is one or more of your children aged 0-6 currently enrolled in a childcare, elementary school, or other early childhood education programs?



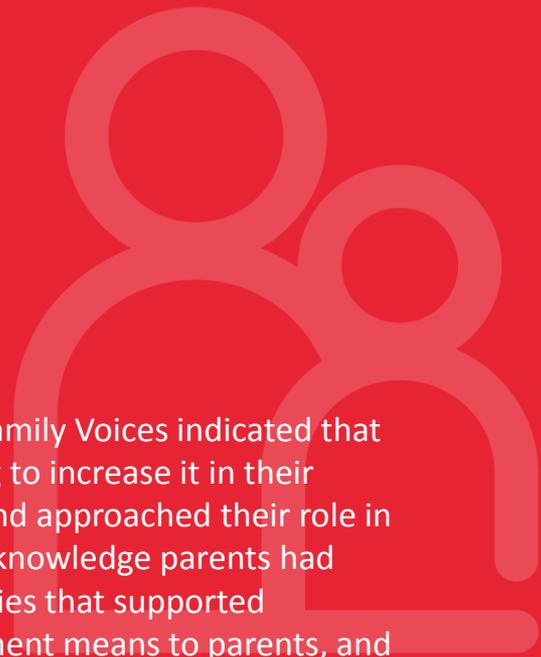
Key Points

The largest number of families indicate their child is enrolled in childcare, followed by elementary school, and the least in an early childhood education program.

Besides families saying their child is enrolled in elementary school, childcare, and early childhood education programs, the more common programs families indicate their child is enrolled in are child development programs, special education school, and preschool.

Families indicate that some of the more common programs that their child is enrolled in includes TLC Academy, Northpoint Academy, Carver, Maxx Kinder Kollege, ABC, Cook, and T's Creation.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT IN EDUCATION



Early conversations with agencies who participated in the first cohort of Forsyth Family Voices indicated that agencies knew that parent involvement was important, and that they were hoping to increase it in their programs. What agencies wanted to know more about was how parents viewed and approached their role in their child’s education—the ways that parents were already involved, the level of knowledge parents had about how to support their child, and the amount emphasis they placed on activities that supported educational success in the early years. This section digs deeper into what involvement means to parents, and lifts up opportunities for additional support.

Topics covered in this section:

- Knowledge on specific education-related topics
- Involvement in their child’s education
- Confidence in supporting their child
- Importance of activities that support development and education
- What prevents parent involvement

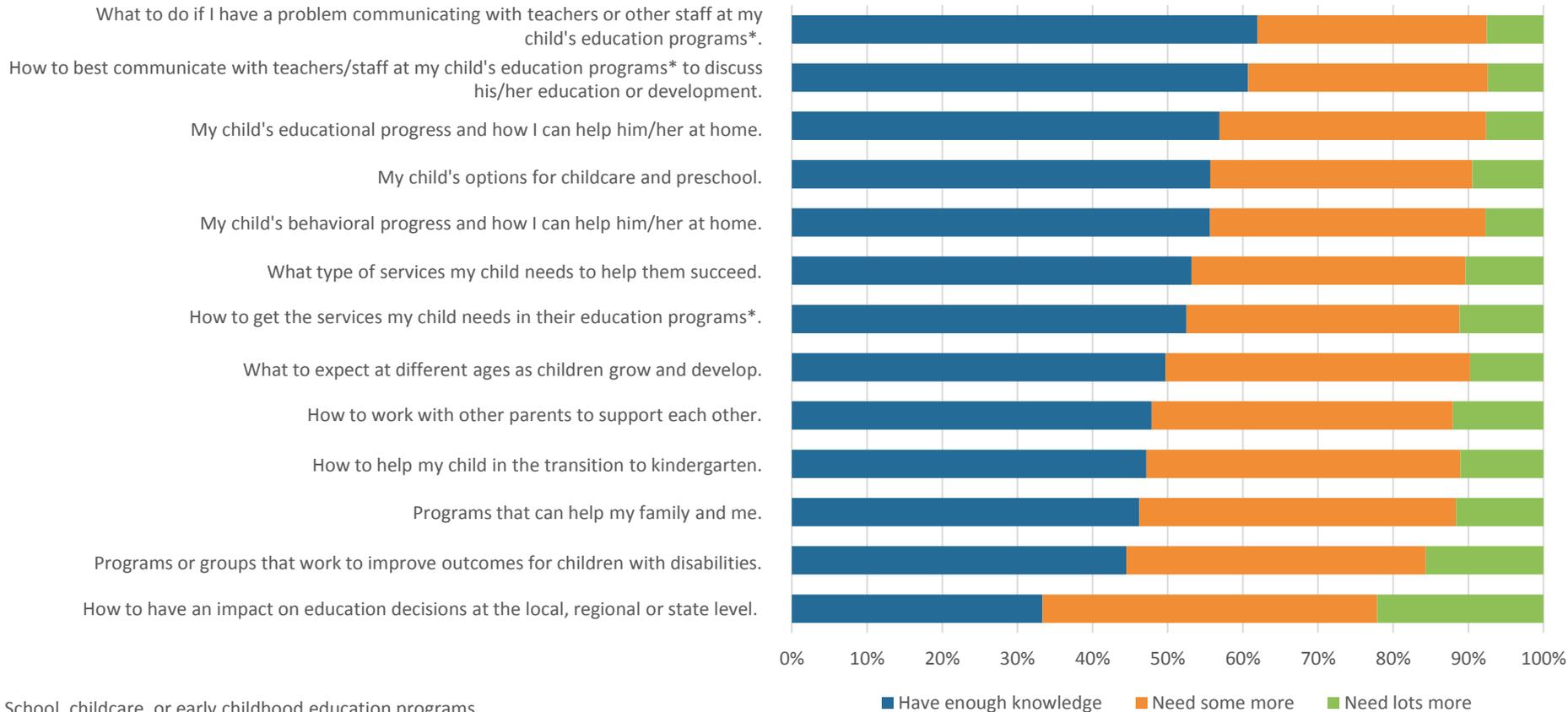
Key Findings:

- Families place strong importance on and are strongly involved in the areas of building a relationship and communicating regularly with teachers, and supporting education and development activities at and outside the home.
- Families say they are not as involved in the areas of volunteering, helping raise money, and participating in parent groups and encouraging other parents.
- Families feel that time is the biggest barrier for not being more involved in their child’s education.

Parent Involvement in Education: PARENT KNOWLEDGE



Please rate how much you know about the topics listed below.



* School, childcare, or early childhood education programs

Key Points

Families say they have enough knowledge about communication with teachers, educational and behavioral progress and what to do at home, and options for childcare.

Families indicate they need more knowledge about the transition to kindergarten, support programs, services for children with disabilities, and impacting education decisions in government.

Comparison Between Subgroups

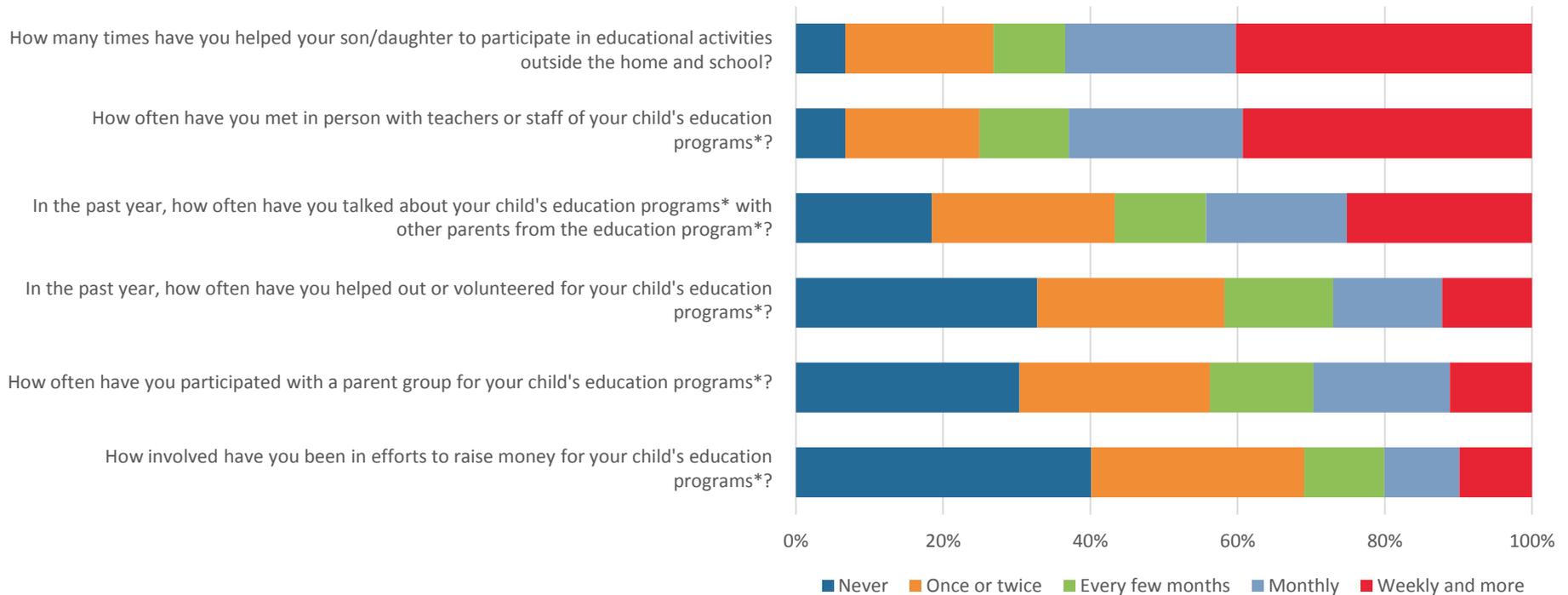
Income – Low-income families, compared to other income groups, indicate they need more knowledge on how best to communicate with teachers.

Race/Ethnicity – Black families, compared to white and Hispanic families, say they have enough knowledge around their child's educational and behavioral progress and what to do at home, and what to expect at different ages. Hispanic families, compared to black and white families, indicate they need more knowledge on how to work with other parents and support each other.

Parent Involvement in Education:
PARENT INVOLVEMENT



Please rate the following statements about your involvement in your child's education.



* School, childcare, or early childhood education programs

Key Points

Families say they are most involved in participating in educational activities outside of the home and meeting with teachers or staff of their child's education programs.

One of the top ways families say they are involved in their child's education that was not included in the questions above is their involvement in education enrichment activities at home.

Families feel they are less involved in helping raise money for education programs and participating in parent groups.

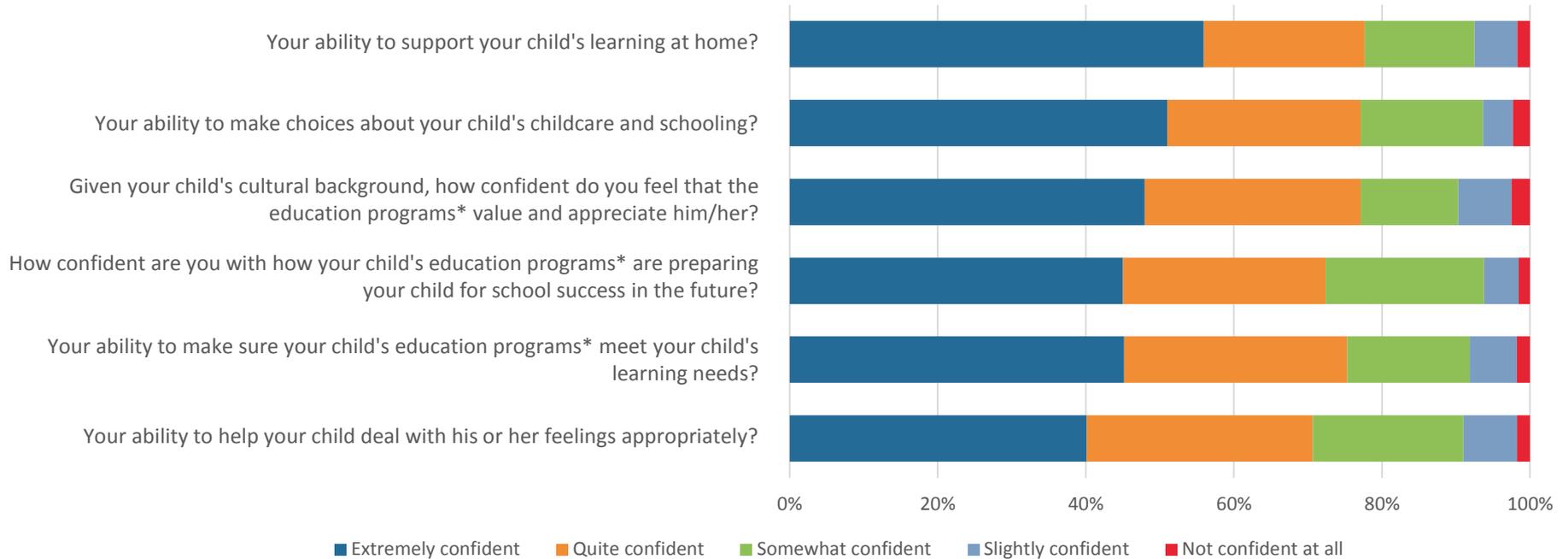
Comparison Between Subgroups

There were no significant differences between income and racial/ethnic sub-groups.

Parent Involvement in Education: PARENT CONFIDENCE



Please rank the following statement regarding your confidence in supporting your child's education.



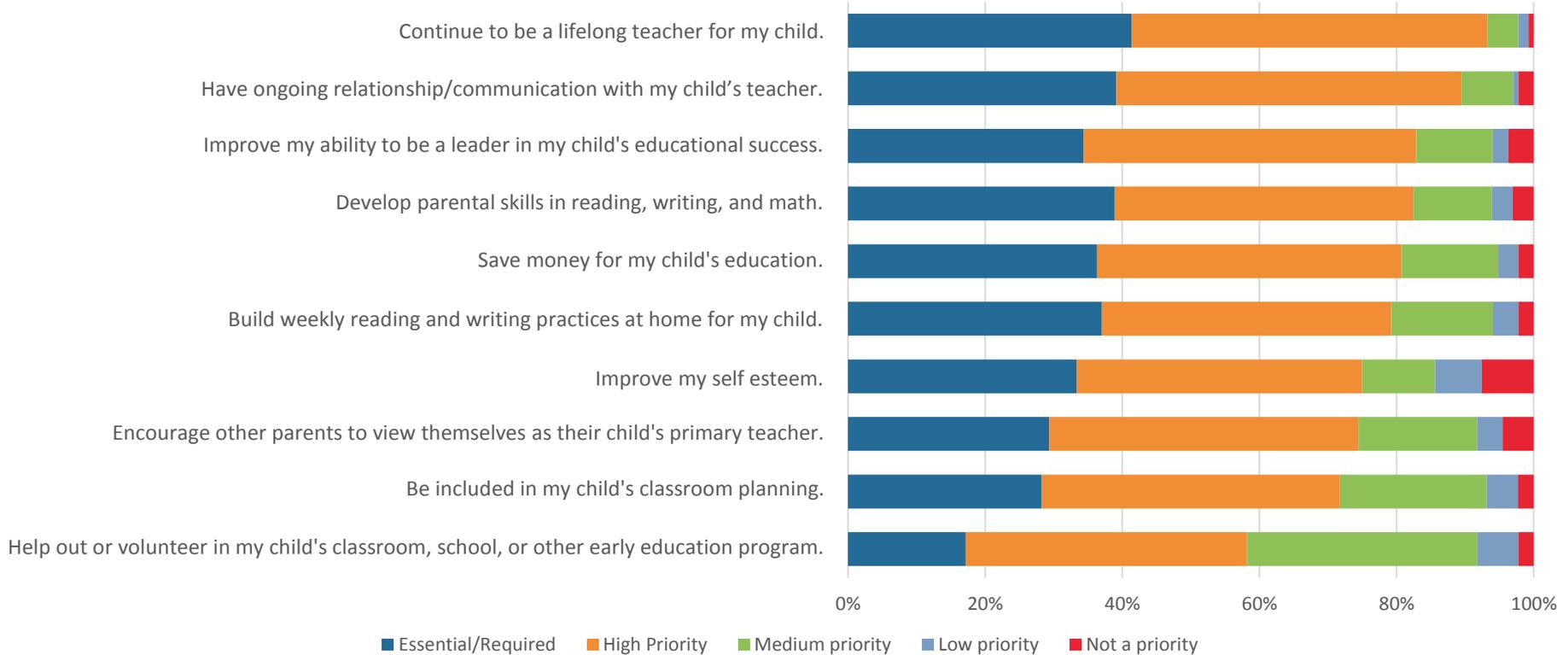
Key Points

Parents generally have a strong degree of confidence across the board, however, parents reported having the least amount of confidence when it comes to helping a child deal with his/her feelings appropriately.

Comparison Between Subgroups

Income – Higher-income families, compared to other income groups, say they are less confident on their ability to help their child deal with his/her feelings and more confident on their child's educational programs valuing and appreciating him/her given his/her cultural background.

Race/Ethnicity – Black families, compared to white and Hispanic families, indicate they are more confident on their ability to make choices about their child's childcare and schooling, support their child's learning at home, and help their child deal with his/her feelings appropriately.



Key Points

Families place a high priority on supporting their child's development and education across all areas, but placed the highest priority on their role in their child's education, communication and relationship with teachers, and saving money for their child's education.

Comparison Between Subgroups

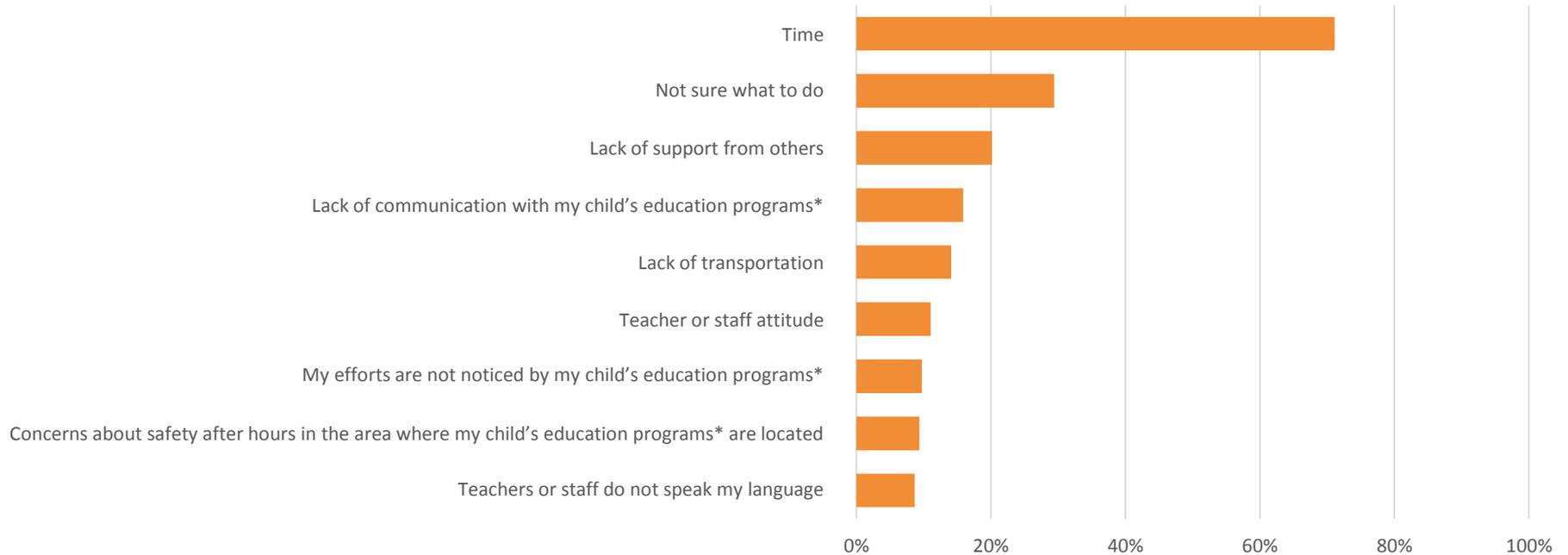
Income – There are no significant differences between groups.

Race/Ethnicity – Hispanic families, compared to white and black families, indicate that developing parental skills in reading, writing, and math is less of a priority.

Parent Involvement in Education: BARRIERS TO INVOLVEMENT



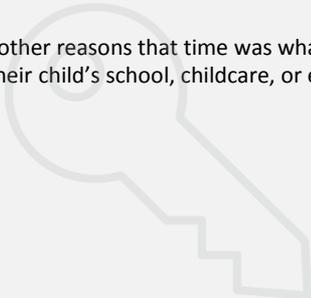
What prevents you as a parent / guardian from being more active in your child's school, childcare, or early childhood education program?



* School, childcare, or early childhood education programs

Key Points

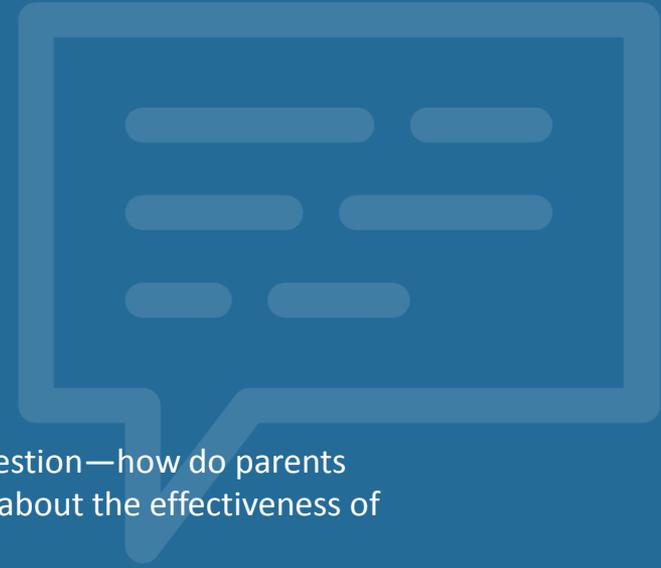
Families say above all other reasons that time was what is preventing being more active in their child's school, childcare, or early education program.



Comparison Between Subgroups

Income – Mid-income families, compared to the other income groups, say that not being sure what to do is less likely to prevent them from being active. Low-income families, compared to the other income groups, indicate that transportation is more likely to prevent them from being more active. Higher-income families, compared to other income groups, indicate that concerns about safety are less likely to prevent them from being active.

Race/Ethnicity – Black families, compared to white and Hispanic families, say that not being sure what to do is less likely to prevent them from being active. Hispanic families, compared to white and black families, indicate that teachers not speaking their language is more likely to prevent them from being active and their efforts not being noticed by their child's education programs is less likely to prevent them from being active.



ACCESSING INFORMATION

Agencies participating in Forsyth Family Voices identified a foundational question—how do parents prefer to receive information? This section provides additional information about the effectiveness of various communication methods with parents.

Key Findings:

- Families cite mixed views about the effectiveness of different communication channels, suggesting various types of communication should be used to reach all families.
- Internet or websites was the only communication channel that families definitively say is very effective and not also one of the least effective ways to communicate.

Data and visualizations for this section have been omitted due to mixed opinions of effective and not effective types of communication.



QUALITY OF LIFE FOR FAMILIES

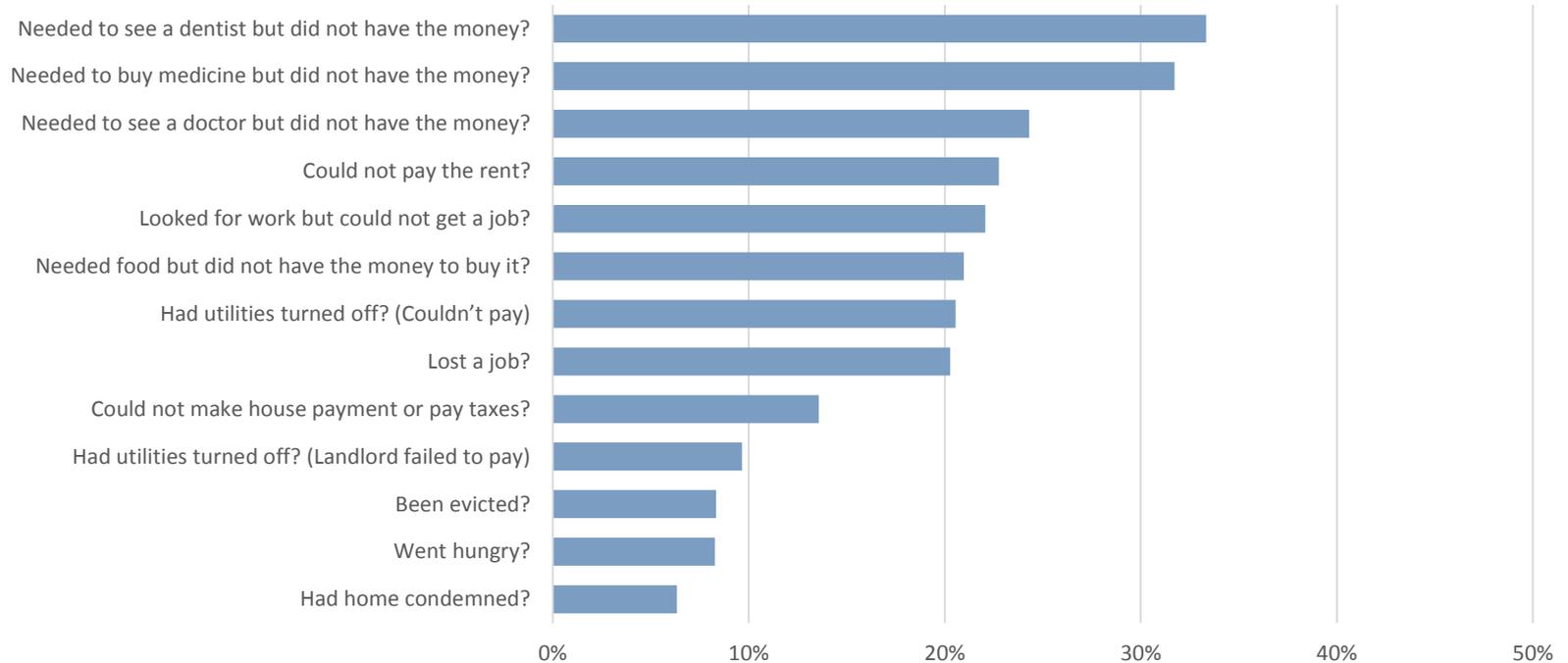
Supports for young children must be informed by the context in which they live. Forsyth Family Voices agencies identified an opportunity to learn about the challenges families experience, and the ways in which their quality of life could be improved. Most of the questions in this section were free or open-ended response, so that families could express important needs and opportunities in their own words.

Topics covered in this section:

- Family hardships over the past year
- What is needed to improve quality of life
- Actions that can be taken to improve quality of life

Key Findings:

- Families indicate that their quality of life would be improved if they had more money, better employment opportunities, more continuing education opportunities, and more family time.
- Families say the biggest barriers to a higher quality of life include the cost burdens associated with medical and dental services, and paying for rent.



Key Points

Families indicated that common issues included needing health services (dentist, medicine, and doctor) but not having the money, not being able to pay rent, and not being able to find a job.

Families say less common issues include being evicted, home being condemned, and going hungry.

Comparison Between Subgroups

Income – Higher-income families, compared to families in the other income groups, indicate they are less likely to need to buy medicine but did not have the money.

Race/Ethnicity – There are no significant differences between groups.

IMPROVING FAMILY QUALITY OF LIFE



What are the 2 or 3 most important things you need to improve your family's quality of life?



What are 2 or 3 things that you can do to improve your family's quality of life?



Key Points

Families strongly indicate that more money was the most important thing they needed to improve their quality of life.

Besides more money, families mention needing a better job (often mentioning a job with better pay), more education, and needing more time (more time with family, better time management, or more time in general).

Key Points

Families indicate most frequently that the things they can do to improve the quality of life for those living in their home include getting a better job, continuing education, spending more time together as a family, and general self-improvement including financial planning, time management, and overall health and wellness.



FORSYTH COUNTY CHALLENGES

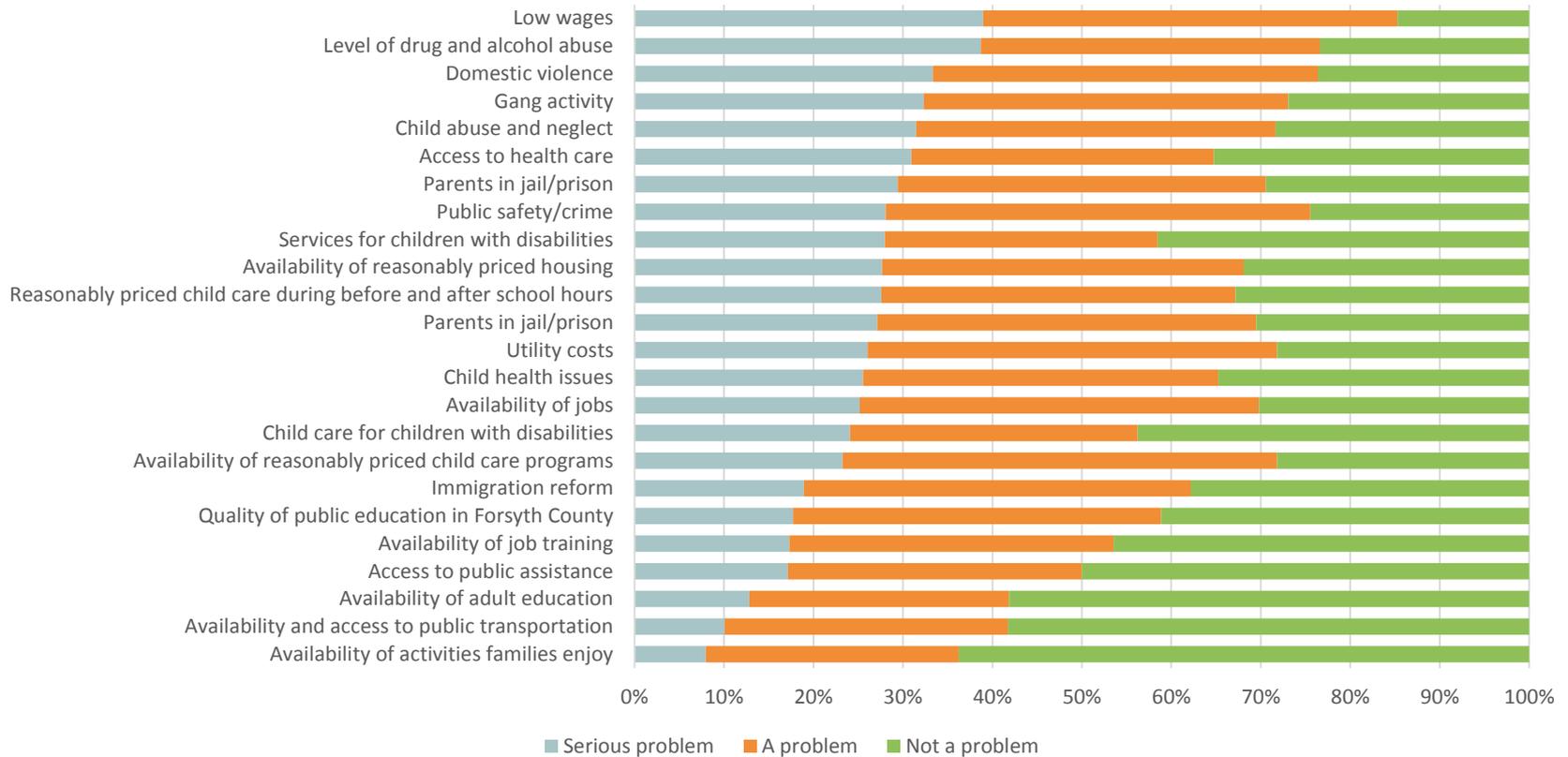
Families are impacted—either directly or indirectly—by the challenges that face their communities. This section provides an opportunity for families to identify and explore the issues facing Forsyth County, including poverty.

Topics covered in this section:

- Issue areas in Forsyth County
- Causes of poverty

Key Findings:

- Families feel that the biggest issues for Forsyth County were low pay, not enough jobs, drug abuse, and domestic violence.



Key Points

Families indicate that the most serious problems for Forsyth County include low wages, drug and alcohol abuse, domestic violence, gang activity, child abuse, and access to healthcare.

Families say less serious problems for Forsyth County include more activities for families, public transit, adult education, access to public assistance, job training, childcare for children with disabilities, services for children with disabilities, and quality of public education.

Comparison Between Subgroups

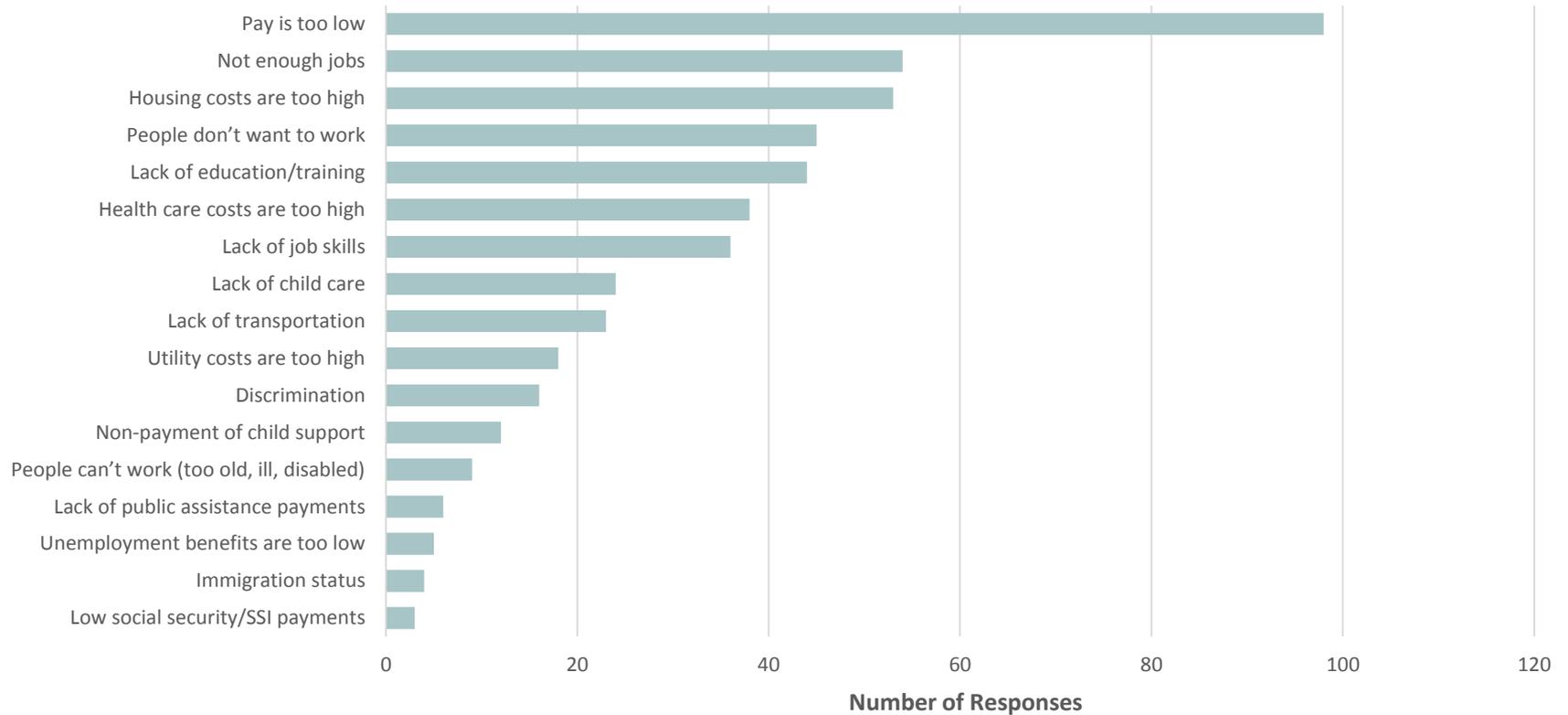
Income – There are no significant differences between groups.

Race/Ethnicity – Hispanic families, compared to white and black families, indicate that many of the issues below were not as serious of a problem including: access to healthcare, child health issues, access to public assistance, childcare for children with disabilities, availability of activities for families, quality of public education, availability of jobs, public safety, domestic violence, and immigration reform.

Forsyth County Challenges:
CAUSES OF POVERTY



Please select the top three reasons you feel are the primary causes of poverty in our county.



Key Points

Families indicate that the primary causes of poverty are pay being too low, not enough jobs, housing costs, people not wanting to work, and lack of training.

Comparison Between Subgroups

Income – There are no significant differences between groups.

Race/Ethnicity – Hispanic families, compared to white and black families, indicate that not enough jobs, lack of job skills, and lack of education/training are less of a cause of poverty and immigration status is more of a cause of poverty.



COMMUNITY SERVICES

Forsyth County has a rich network of community services and resources to support young children. Agencies participating in Forsyth Family Voices wanted to learn about families' perceptions of and access to early childhood education resources, and to understand what other types of services families utilized. Additionally, this section includes information about families' views on how agencies might best support them.

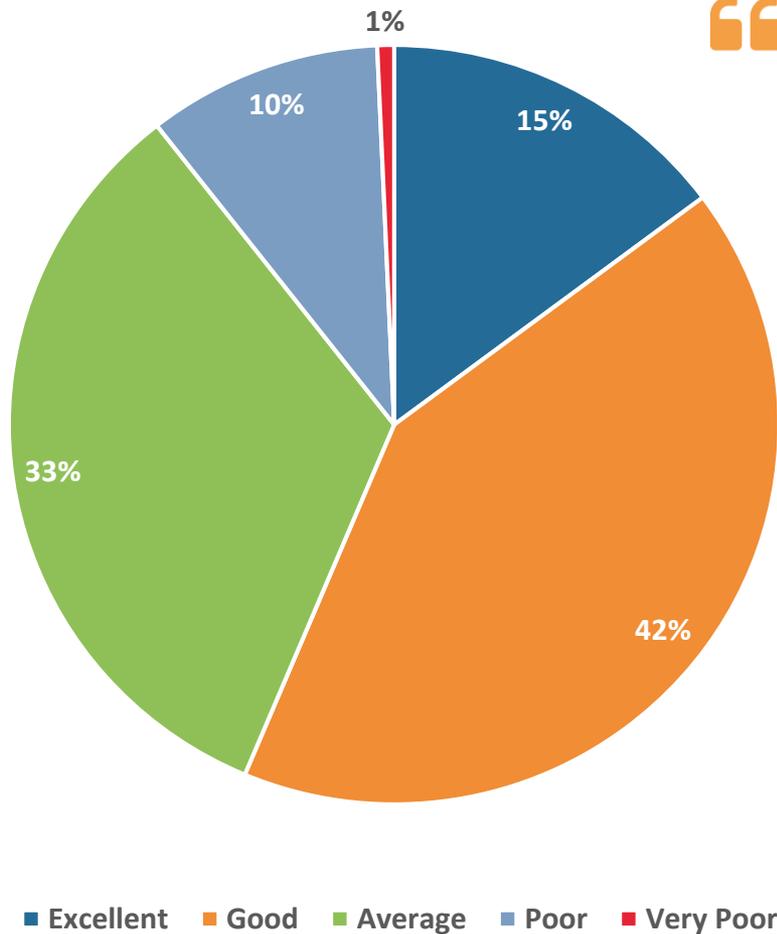
Topics covered in this section:

- Reputation of early childhood education services
- Access to free early childhood education opportunities
- Most utilized services
- Organizational contribution to family quality of life

Key Findings:

- Families give generally favorable reviews of early childhood education services.
- The majority of families indicate that it was difficult or very difficult to receive free childcare/preschool.
- Families indicate that organizations could help improve the quality of life for their families by providing more resources and programs, and improving their marketing.

EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES REPUTATION



“ In your opinion, what is the reputation of early childhood education and services in Forsyth County? ”

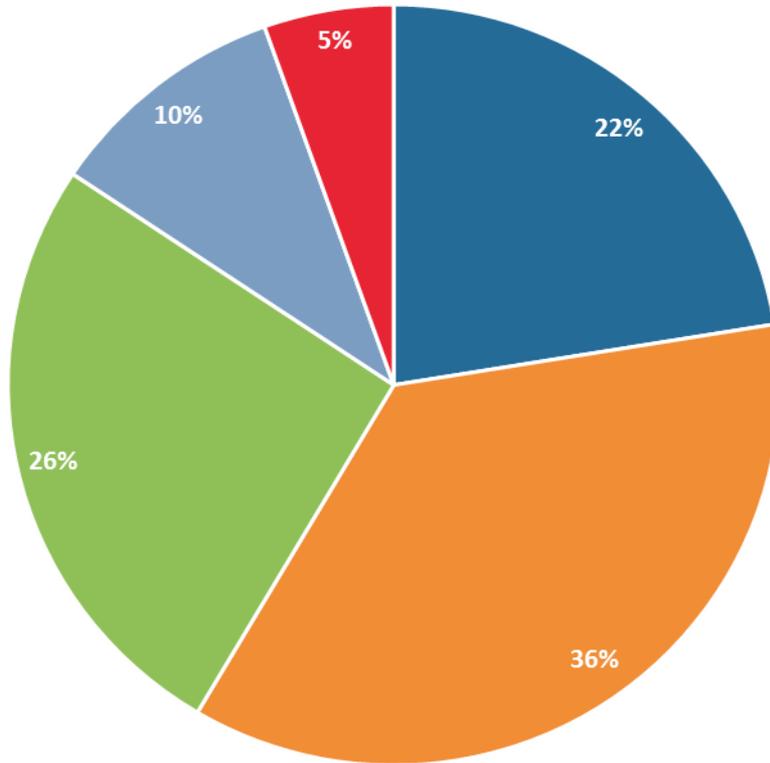
Key Points

The majority of families say early childhood education and services have a good or excellent reputation.

Comparison Between Subgroups

There are no significant differences between income and racial/ethnic sub-groups.

DIFFICULTY IN GETTING FREE EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES



■ Very Difficult ■ Difficult ■ Neutral ■ Easy ■ Very Easy

“ How difficult is it to get free early childhood education services for your child? ”

Key Points

More than 50% of families say they have a difficult or very difficult time getting free early childhood education services.

Comparison Between Subgroups

There are no significant differences between income and racial/ethnic sub-groups.

FREQUENTLY USED SERVICES



List the top 2 service agencies that your neighbors use the most in Forsyth County.



Type of Services

-  Human Services
-  Health Services
-  Education Services

Key Points

Families say the most common agencies that their neighbors use are DSS, health care, general education, human services, public education, SNAP, Downtown Health Plaza, Salvation Army, SSI, housing, WIC, Medicaid, Forsyth Technical Community College, Health Department, Medicare, and Smart Start.

HOW COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS CAN IMPROVE FAMILY QUALITY OF LIFE



What are 2 or 3 things that Forsyth community organizations can do to improve quality of life for those living in your home?



Key Points

Families indicate three primary themes of how community organizations can improve the quality of life for their families, including more resources, more programs/services, and better marketing and awareness of services.

- More resources includes availability of higher paying jobs, food stamps, help with household needs, and financial aid.
- More programs and services includes special needs supports, childcare, more community events, education, more activities, housing, more healthcare, and financial planning.

LOOKING AHEAD

Families' ideas and perspectives are being amplified through the distribution of FFV data, and this will continue in 2018. The Kate B. Reynold's Charitable Trust is using the FFV data to inform their strategy and grantmaking for Great Expectations, and the North Carolina Early Childhood foundation included data from FFV in the recent report "Not About Me, Without Me: Raising Parent Voice to Guide Early Childhood Policy." Participating agencies will meet with Forsyth Futures for "data deep dives," where they will explore the data specific to their agency, and consider two things: how they might be responsive to the needs and opportunities expressed by parents, and where additional family voice could inform their planning and decision

making. Finally, staff and parents from a diverse group of agencies are participating in the FFV Learning Network, where they are learning together about how to make agency program planning and decision making more inclusive, and how to cultivate and empower parent leaders. We are grateful to the agency staff and parents who have participated in FFV, and we look forward to continued collaboration to improve early childhood systems and help young children and their families thrive.