

2021

Supplemental Report: A Focus on Spanish-Speaking Families

Building a better future for Whatcom County children

Survey report of families' needs in their child's
first five years





Introduction

This supplemental document serves as a counterpart to our collaborative's full Whatcom Family and Provider Needs Survey Report. The full survey contains responses from nearly 400 local families and professionals to determine where our system of child and family services is working well and where more support is needed.

Survey results showed that Spanish-speaking and English-speaking families have different experiences with our child and family system. These differences appear in many areas, including satisfaction levels with available services, family needs, and experiences raising children.

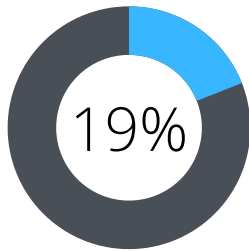
The purpose of this report is to focus on the experiences, challenges, and perspectives of Spanish-speaking families. By highlighting these voices as a guide for our work, we aim to address equity issues, remove barriers to families accessing support, and develop a system that serves all children and families, in the ways that work best for them.

Survey results were gathered from 91 Spanish-speaking families who have at least one child 5 years old or younger. Families were evenly split between having private insurance, Apple Health (Medicaid), or no insurance at all.

Pregnancy, birth, and postpartum care

Responses from Spanish-Speaking Families

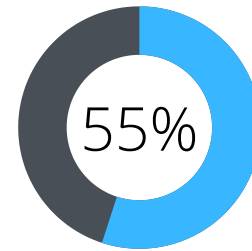
Becoming a parent



of new parents said they felt "not at all prepared"

0% of parents said they felt "very prepared"

Postpartum Depression



of families said they **wouldn't recognize symptoms of postpartum depression** or know where to get help

Resources in the first year of their children's life that families...

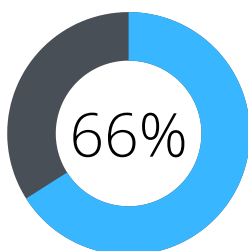
...have used and would use again:

1. Home visiting for 1-on-1 support
2. Pregnancy care
3. Breastfeeding/nutrition, Play and learn groups (tied)

...would've used if they'd had time:

1. Individual/couples counseling
2. Parenting support in healthcare setting
3. Support groups

Overall, **Spanish-speaking families were far less likely to have used parenting, pregnancy, and support services** during the first years of their child's life. This wasn't for a lack of interest: these same families were also interested in or open to the idea of using services, suggesting a gap in awareness of services or the availability of services that fit their needs.



of Spanish-speaking families who did access resources said that they would not access them again. This is a stark contrast to English-speaking families, 71% of whom said they would access services again.

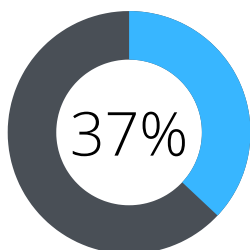
Support in the early years

Responses from Spanish-Speaking Families

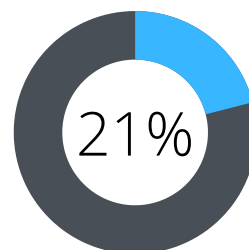
Healthy Foods:

The majority of families said that **access to healthy foods would be the most helpful resource** they could receive right now.

51% of Spanish-speaking families said that access to healthy food would be helpful for their family, compared to 34% of English-speaking families.



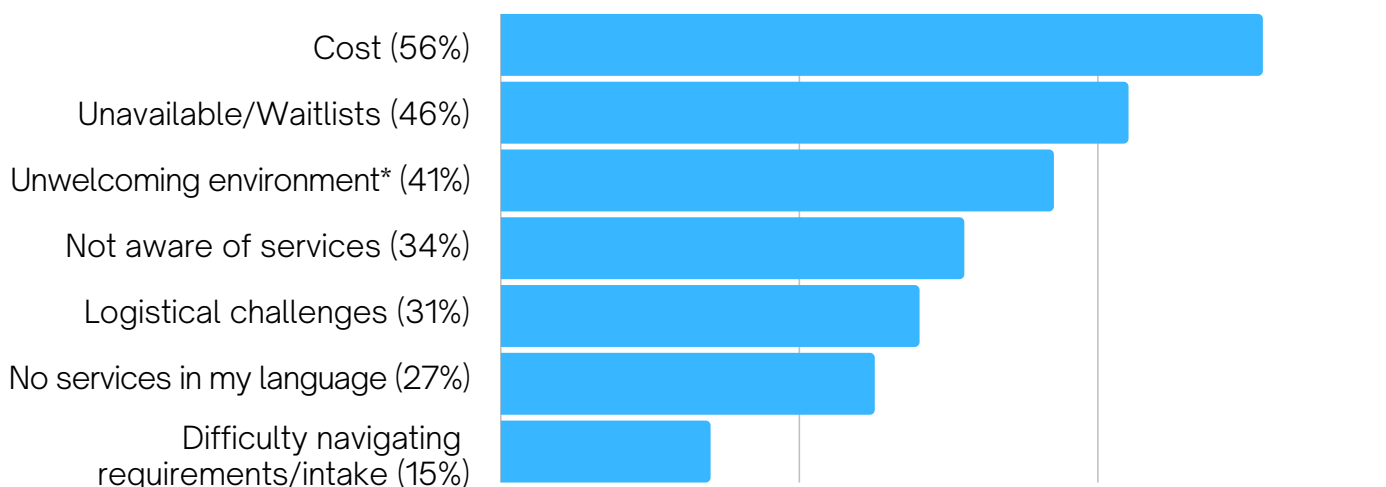
37% of families said they need housing resources, compared with 17% of English-speaking families



21% of families said they need developmental support, compared with 8% of English-speaking families

Barriers to getting support

Even when services are available, it can be difficult for families to access them. While cost was the most common barrier, many other factors were also significant barriers to getting support.



**Spanish-speaking families were more likely to have experienced an unwelcoming environment (42%), compared to English-speaking families (28%)*

Communication matters

Responses from Spanish-Speaking Families



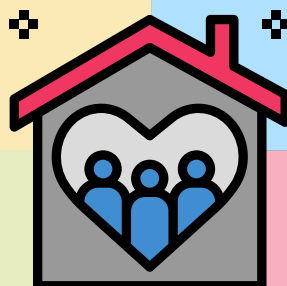
Where do families go for information?

Families were **most likely to turn to peers, family members, and coworkers** for parenting information, and at much higher rates than English-speaking families.



Do families trust providers?

68% said they could talk to their childcare provider about their needs. **36%** said they could turn to their child's healthcare provider.



What communication works?

Parents have a **strong preference for communication by email**, followed by phone or text.



What are families' experiences with SEAS?

28% of families had either not used or not heard of the SEAS program, compared with 16% of English-speaking families. Half of Spanish-speaking families who used the program found it helpful.

Reader Reflection:

What do you notice about the experiences of Spanish-speaking families and their relationships within the child and family system? How can these responses help guide our work? How do we center their perspectives and improve equity and accessibility in our organizations?

What's next?

It will take all of us working together. You are part of the Help Me Grow network, with WELA and our community partners working to create a community where all families have the resources they need. The survey responses from families and providers will help inform and guide how resources are developed, accessed, and communicated.

Our current and future work includes:

- Using the Help Me Grow (HMG) framework to build on our community's strengths and develop a well-connected, easily accessible system of resources and support. HMG will be utilized in the process of identifying existing resources, thinking creatively about how to make the most of existing opportunities, and building a coalition.
- Expanding the SEAS Program to become a Coordinated Access Point, through which all families with children up to 5 years old will be served, regardless of health status. SEAS will continue to serve children and youth up to 21 years old who have special healthcare needs.
- Improving services for parents who are experiencing mood and anxiety disorders in the first year of parenthood through the Perinatal Mental Health Taskforce.
- Building a reliable, up-to-date resource directory through which comprehensive information about services can be effectively managed, distributed, and used.

Reader Reflections:

The families and providers who participated in this survey offered invaluable insights on how we can improve our system. What stood out to you in their responses? Where do they want to see change happen? How can you use their responses to shape your work?

We encourage you to consider how you can become part of this project. To learn more about being involved or for more information, contact Vesla Tonnessen at welacoordinator@gmail.com.



SEAS Program
Whatcom Infant and Children's Council

Distrito Escolar de Bellingham
Distrito Escolar de Nooksack Valley

Whatcom Taking Action
Grupo de trabajo de salud mental perinatal