



Community Needs Assessment Early Childhood Development

April 15, 2010

UNMET COMMUNITY NEEDS AND BARRIERS

1. Leader/Convener to Facilitate Cross Organization Planning
 - a. No dialogue across various island communities and among community organizations regarding total Orcas population needs.
 - b. No source of leadership and institutional memory to provide consistency across the years for collaboration successes/failures & ideas.
 - c. A solid business plan to build community support for a family resource center and other funding to support the above.
 - d. Limited time/resources for collaboration between Readiness to Learn and Orcas Family Connections

2. Centralized Place & Resources for Family Collaboration, Information & Support
 - a. Parent isolation – no central place for parent information, gathering & sharing. Need for parenting group organization and coordination.
 - b. Limited help for families in accessing and applying for subsidies & other government programs. No easy way to identify and greet new residents to help with needs.
 - c. No central outreach to new island families. (“Child Find”-like service not available on Orcas)
 - d. Lack of support groups and respite support for families with special needs, grandparents as primary care givers, etc.
 - e. Limited information for “is this normal” questions and answers. Need a central place and resources to help with organization/coordination of collaboration opportunities for early childhood resources, medical personnel, parent groups, etc.

3. Program Limitations.
 - a. Space limitations within current Early Childcare programs – waiting lists.
 - b. No source of childcare for weekends & evenings to support working parents with non-standard hours.
 - c. Lack of sick child centers for working parents.
 - d. Need for a developmental kindergarten (pre-K preparation).

4. Missing Services
 - a. No clothing or child gear bank for clothing/supplying families. Exchange with very limited hours and items.
 - b. Limited child development testing & information prior to kindergarten.
 - c. Non-existent birth to 3 year parent education & support for all.
 - d. No subsidized/free legal assistance for families with child-related (and other) issues.

- e. No funding for medical translation.
- f. Lack of transportation for Early Childhood programs & medical care.
- g. No emergency shelter for families beyond immediate DVSA's. Rise in teen pregnancy with no resources to support them with preparation and parenting.
- h. No local training for early childhood educational training. No Spanish classes for childcare educators.

5. Limited Funding

- a. Limited emergency funds for health, dental, etc. for children.
- b. No single source of preschool scholarship funds/tuition assistance – making cost an issue in preschool education and option of school.
- c. No multi-year funding for preschool/childcare scholarships for program consistency planning for centers and families.
- d. Increasing State training requirements for early childhood teaching without commensurate reimbursement for training expenses (mandated but not funded requirements), especially for extra travel expenses because of our remote location. On-line training limited in value.
- e. Limited/non-existent federal funds to support birth to 3 year programs (e.g., Early ECEAP or Head Start under 3 year funding)
- f. No funding to pay for the time for teachers & others to participate with collaboration activities to avoid direct impact to paychecks for missed work hours.
- g. Insufficient funds to continue collaboration programs with other community organizations (i.e., Chamber Music funding early childhood music, etc.)
- h. Limited funding for Orcas Family Connections.

6. Other Issues

- a. All of the above family challenges multiplied for Spanish-speaking population due to language and cultural barriers.
- b. Biases among some families for childhood collaboration across centers (social, language, etc.)

WHAT CHANGES MIGHT IMPACT YOUR ORGANIZATION?

1. Funding decreases as a result of the economy or other governmental priorities. Decreases in:
 - a. Government programs & subsidies (WIC, childcare subsidies, ITEP, MSS, Basic Health, etc.)
 - b. Donor funding
 - c. Grant opportunities
2. Financial hardships of families increasing the need for scholarships, support services, etc. that require public/private funding and coordination.
3. Demographic changes:
 - a. Increasing Spanish-speaking population.
 - b. Young families forced to leave the island due to lack of income sources (jobs) and cost of living
 - c. Other families moving to the island with significant needs
 - d. Telecommuting parents with different childcare needs/hours
4. ECEAP slots increase or decrease.
5. Potential government mandates for early childhood or other infant/child programs (funded or unfunded)
6. Changes in funding for all day kindergarten.
7. Administrative support sharing or other collaborative/sharing funding/opportunities.

GREATEST LEARNINGS FROM THIS COLLABORATION MEETING

1. Tremendous amount of caring, expertise & energy within the group to tackle the challenges.
2. Many possibilities to explore.
3. There is a great need for funding for further collaboration and a sharing for work savings for all organizations:
 - a. Centralized facility
 - b. Paid coordinator
 - c. Centralized information
4. Need more meetings – continued collaboration, larger collaborative effort.
5. The amazing level of evolution of childcare/preschool sharing and collaboration over the last several years.
6. Opportunities exist for Board collaboration for more progress and ideas.
7. Participants in the Needs Assessment have multiple disciplinary backgrounds and are able to look beyond their own organizations/jobs to focus on what is best for the community.
8. There is a future need for measuring progress in early childhood development programs and collaborative initiatives.
9. It will take a long time.