

Coos Family Support Survey Results August 2008

There are 1,890 families in Coos County with children under the age of six. In May we distributed 800 surveys throughout the County and 325 people completed and returned the survey.

Who completed the survey?

Most of the parents were female (87%) with an average age of 31 (ranged from 15 to 63). Most parents were married (58%) or living with someone as a couple (18%). There was a wide range in family income with 26% having more than \$50,000, 11% \$40-50,000, 15% \$30-40,000, 16% \$20-30,000, 16% \$10-20,000, and 17% 0-\$10,000. Nearly half (45%) of parents work full-time and two-thirds of their spouse/partner work full-time. Parents have lived at their current address on average for 4.5 years and have lived in Coos country for an average of 18 years. The majority (61%) of parents have not moved in the past 2 years.

Health

Responses to the health indicators were generally positive.

- Two-thirds of children (66%) eat at least 3 servings of fruits and vegetables a day, but 29% have 1 to 2 and 5% have none.
- 97% have health insurance for their child, 97% have child immunizations up to date, and 96% have been to a well-child visit in the past year

There are, however, some health areas that could be improved.

- 21% of children watch at least 3 hours of TV a day
- 44% of children have not been to a dentist and 36% of adult parents do not go to the dentist every year

A number of questions asked about the parent's health. In general, responses indicated positive parent health although,

- 15% of parents felt depressed in the past 2 weeks
- 29% of parents with young children reported excessive drinking at least twice in the past year (5 or more drinks for men and 4 or more drinks for women)
- 17% of parents have been in a physically abusive relationship and 6% have experienced this in the past 2 years.

Safety

Although there were some positive safety indicators (98% of parents use a car seat for their child and 99% have smoke alarms), there are a number of areas that could be the focus of educational campaigns to help improve safety for families.

- 20% of parents do not know whether there is lead paint where they live
- 51% of parents have no safety locks on kitchen cabinets and 64% have no safety locks on bathroom cabinets
- 13% of households include someone who smokes cigarettes inside the house

Economic

Nearly half of parents have received information on how to budget or manage money. The vast majority (91%) have some kind of bank account. Yet, there are many areas that could be improved related to the economic indicators.

- 40% of parents have no money set aside for emergencies
- 22% of parents do not have enough money to make ends meet at the end of the month
- Although 53% of parents were eligible for EITC last year, 22% of parents were not sure whether they were eligible.

Education

More than half of the parents surveyed (62%) said that they read to their child every day, but there are other areas that could be improved to support high quality early learning for children in Coos

- 17% of parents said they read to their child 1 to 3 days a week
- Only 33% of parents surveyed said they use licensed child care centers, 44% of parents said they mostly use family or friends for child care
- 38% of parents said that their child does not participate in any organized learning activities such as preschool, head start, or a play group.

Family

Most parents agreed that they generally eat dinner together as a family, they have someone to talk to about parenting, they have confidence in their parenting ability, and most use non-coercive discipline such as toy removal, “time out”, and verbal explanations. One area that could be improved :

- More than half (58%) of parents yell and 10% sometimes spank their child.

Community Services

The majority of parents said they would know where to go for help in their community. When asked about the biggest challenges in meeting family needs, there was a clear consensus that parents want more fun family recreational activities.

- About 20% of parents said they would **not know** where to go for alcohol or drug dependency help, parenting/home visitation services, transportation, help to stop smoking, or early learning services
- 27% of parents in the survey said that finding child care was their top challenge
- 23% said fuel assistance was their top challenge
- 20% said knowing how to discipline without spanking and yelling was a challenge
- 18% said access to health care was a challenge

Summary

The survey findings suggest that there are a number of areas that we could target to help improve the quality of life for families with young children. If we work together as a community we could, for example, help families create strategies to read more and watch less TV, or develop a campaign to get all families to use safety locks or provide a county-wide commitment/plan to have all children see a dentist. What this survey does is provide us with information on where the gaps are, now it is up to us to make the changes.