



# Westside Pilot

Understanding family needs, knowledge, and perspectives in 78237.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Westside Pilot was a community-rooted data collection effort designed to listen to and learn from families—especially those not currently connected to structured early learning programs. Conducted in collaboration with four anchor centers—AVANCE, Good Samaritan Center, Madonna Neighborhood Center, and YWCA San Antonio—the survey focused on understanding how families navigate early learning, what they value, where they turn for support, and what gaps remain.

Rather than relying on institutional channels, the project prioritized relational engagement through home-to-home canvassing and local outreach, centering families often left out of traditional data collection. Promotoras from Family Service Association led the canvassing, conducting 130 surveys across ZIP code 78237.

The responses reveal that families are seeking strong relationships with educators and caregivers, trustworthy guidance on developmental milestones, and access to reliable resources across sectors. Themes of trust, access, and the importance of educator-family relationships ran consistently throughout the data.

The findings offer timely insights for Early Matters San Antonio’s Family Engagement Workgroup, reinforcing the importance of community-informed strategies that connect families to early learning, developmental guidance, and wraparound services. This project affirms that family engagement is not just a strategy—it is a foundational condition for advancing equity, strengthening quality, and expanding opportunity from birth.

### *Key Recommendations:*

- **Expand digital tools that reflect how families search for care.** Families are actively using social media and online platforms to explore early learning options, yet awareness of enrollment supports remains uneven. Early Matters San Antonio’s work to develop a comprehensive search tool reflects a timely response to what families are already doing—navigating care decisions online and through trusted networks. Future tools should be user-friendly, mobile-first, and designed to meet families where they are.
- **Raise awareness of quality and affordability indicators like TRS, CCS, and NAEYC.** Survey responses revealed that recognition of these systems remains limited. Awareness efforts should move beyond simply naming programs—helping families understand what these indicators mean, why they matter, and how they relate to their choices.
- **Strengthen communication between families and educators.** While most families in structured care report frequent contact, opportunities remain to deepen two-way communication and ensure families feel equipped to support and advocate for their child’s development.
- **Ensure materials and supports are accessible in both language and design.** With nearly half of families completing the survey in Spanish and 89% reporting access to bilingual resources, maintaining and expanding linguistically inclusive tools is essential—especially in communities where this level of access is not yet the norm.
- **Integrate wraparound supports across sectors.** Families rely on a mix of educational, medical, and community-based services to support development. Coordinated strategies that connect families to parenting support, healthcare, early intervention, and basic needs resources will create more cohesive pathways to early learning.
- **Expand access to affordable, high-quality care.** Cost and eligibility remain significant barriers, particularly for families not connected to structured care. Efforts to improve access must include financial transparency, increased affordability, and continued policy advocacy to ensure all families can choose the care that works best for them.



## BACKGROUND

In Bexar County, more than 132,000 children under the age of five live in a landscape shaped by persistent inequities in access, quality, and affordability. According to the 2025 Early Learning Landscape Report by Texas A&M University–San Antonio (TAMUSA), providers report operating at just 70% of their licensed capacity—leaving fewer than 62,000 realistic seats available. That means an estimated 70,000 children under five are not in structured care—some by choice, but many others because of limited availability, affordability, or alignment with family needs.

Even among families who qualify for public subsidies, access can be out of reach. According to Workforce Solutions Alamo, more than 4,000 eligible children remain on the waitlist for Texas Workforce Commission-funded childcare assistance in Bexar County—and that figure only reflects a subset of the population who qualify for financial support. Infants, children with special care needs, and families requiring care outside of standard business hours face some of the steepest barriers.

These are not isolated challenges; they are systemic ones—intersecting across workforce, affordability, and family access.

Early Matters San Antonio (EMSA), a collaborative initiative focused on improving access to and quality of early learning, has prioritized these challenges through the development of a community-driven Impact Plan. While policy efforts across Texas and Bexar County aim to strengthen program quality and stabilize the early childhood workforce, families remain central to every solution. Quality only matters if families can find it, access it, and trust it. That’s why the Family Engagement domain of EMSA’s Impact Plan calls not only for structural reform—but for authentic, relational strategies that meet families where they are.

The Westside Pilot was developed to support that vision.

Launched in partnership with AVANCE, Good Samaritan, Madonna Center, and YWCA San Antonio, the pilot aimed to understand how families—especially those not currently enrolled in formal childcare early learning programs—experience the search for early learning. Rather than limiting the work to traditional indicators or enrollment-based data, the project sought to reach a wide range of families and gather insight into their needs, knowledge, and perspectives. The work was grounded in a community-guided survey, built around relational questions designed to surface meaningful insight about decision-making, trust, and access.

The effort reflects a broader understanding: that systemic improvements in quality and access must be informed by how families navigate and experience those systems in practice. As the region continues to expand professional pathways, raise quality standards, and improve affordability, this pilot helps ensure that those investments are reaching families—and that families are equipped to engage with those investments.

It is one step in a larger strategy to build a more connected, equitable early childhood system—one that centers families not just as recipients, but as co-creators of the future.



## METHODOLOGY

### *Process*

The Westside Pilot survey was developed through a collaborative process led by Early Matters San Antonio in partnership with four anchor organizations: AVANCE, Good Samaritan Center, Madonna Neighborhood Center, and YWCA San Antonio. The goal was to understand the needs, knowledge, and perspectives of families—particularly those not currently connected to structured early learning systems—by engaging them directly and relationally within their communities. The intended survey population was families residing in ZIP code 78237 with at least one child under the age of six who had not yet entered kindergarten.

The survey was co-developed and refined with guidance from anchor partners to ensure questions reflected families' lived experiences, language, and access to information. Once finalized, it was translated into Spanish using accessible, community-specific language, with input from promotoras to ensure clarity and cultural relevance. Promotoras, recruited through Family Service Association, received training that covered the purpose of the project, a full walk-through of each question, and how the survey aligned with the Family Engagement strategies outlined in the Early Matters Impact Plan.

Data collection took place from March 24 through the end of April. The 78237 zip code was divided into several regions, with two promotora teams conducting door-to-door canvassing across the full geography. While the primary method of outreach was home-to-home canvassing, promotoras also participated in a select number of local events to extend their reach, including weekend canvassing efforts and community-based gatherings such as an Easter event at a local apartment complex, the United Way Kids Festival, and KLRN's Kids Day in the Park. In total, approximately 9,600 households were canvassed, resulting in 130 completed surveys. To encourage participation, a raffle was held for \$50 Walmart gift cards.

To preserve the project's focus on reaching families beyond structured care, the team opted not to pursue focus groups or distribute the survey directly through partner centers, as doing so would have disproportionately captured the perspectives of families already engaged in formal programs. A Google Form version of the survey was briefly circulated through partner networks as a non-targeted alternative, but it received no responses.

Finally, a small number of surveys were completed by phone through outreach from Family Service Association staff to families connected to broader neighborhood-based programs. Because these contacts were not selected based on care type, they were consistent with the project's inclusive and community-based approach.

### *Sample Size*

Based on 2023 American Community Survey (ACS) data, we estimate that approximately 1,222 households in ZIP code 78237 have at least one child under age six. This figure is derived from the ACS estimate that 38.4% of households with children under 18 ( $n = 3,182 \pm 406$ ) have a child under six. Both the household total and the age distribution carry margins of error, and when those are applied using standard statistical methods, the lower-bound estimate of eligible households is approximately 844 (calculated as  $2,776 \times 30.4\%$ , using the lower bounds of each component).

Our sample of 130 completed surveys therefore falls at or above the threshold required for achieving a  $\pm 8\%$  margin of error at 95% confidence, assuming a true eligible population between 844 and 966 households.

It is also important to note that the ACS estimate includes all children under 6, including 5-year-olds who may already be enrolled in kindergarten. Since our survey excluded kindergartners, this population estimate may



modestly overstate eligibility. However, due to the lack of child-level household distribution data, no additional downward adjustment was applied.

Our field methods included comprehensive door-to-door canvassing of all blocks, outreach to apartments and high-density housing, and engagement at community events and public spaces. These diverse recruitment strategies helped ensure participation from both structured and informal care settings, supporting the conclusion that our findings are statistically sound and reasonably representative of the early childhood population in ZIP code 78237.

## *Limitations*

Several real-world barriers shaped the data collection process for the Westside Pilot. Most significantly, families expressed deep and valid fears related to immigration enforcement and government surveillance—especially in a political climate where vulnerable communities are actively targeted. Related concerns included anxiety about child welfare involvement, general distrust of data collection, and hesitancy among younger parents to engage. Caregiver availability during daytime hours also limited participation, as many households were unavailable or difficult to reach at the time of canvassing. While these limitations may have affected who was able or willing to participate, they underscore the importance of relational approaches grounded in trust, and the need for future strategies to account for these structural and emotional realities.



## DEMOGRAPHICS AND CONTEXTUAL

### Language of Survey Completion

Of the 130 households surveyed, 59% completed the survey in English (n = 77) and 41% in Spanish (n = 53). Among families using structured care settings, 64% responded in English and 36% in Spanish. Among unstructured care households, English remained the majority language (53%), though nearly half (47%) completed the survey in Spanish.

These figures align with broader demographic patterns in ZIP code 78237. According to the 2023 American Community Survey, 66% of households in the zip code speak a language other than English at home, with Spanish specifically spoken in 65.7% of households. While this does not necessarily indicate monolingualism, it reflects the area's strong bilingual context.

In our own data, the choice to complete the survey in Spanish suggests a preference for engaging in the language respondents feel most comfortable using—an important factor when considering how families access information, services, and support. Language often mediates whether families can fully engage with early learning systems and resources.

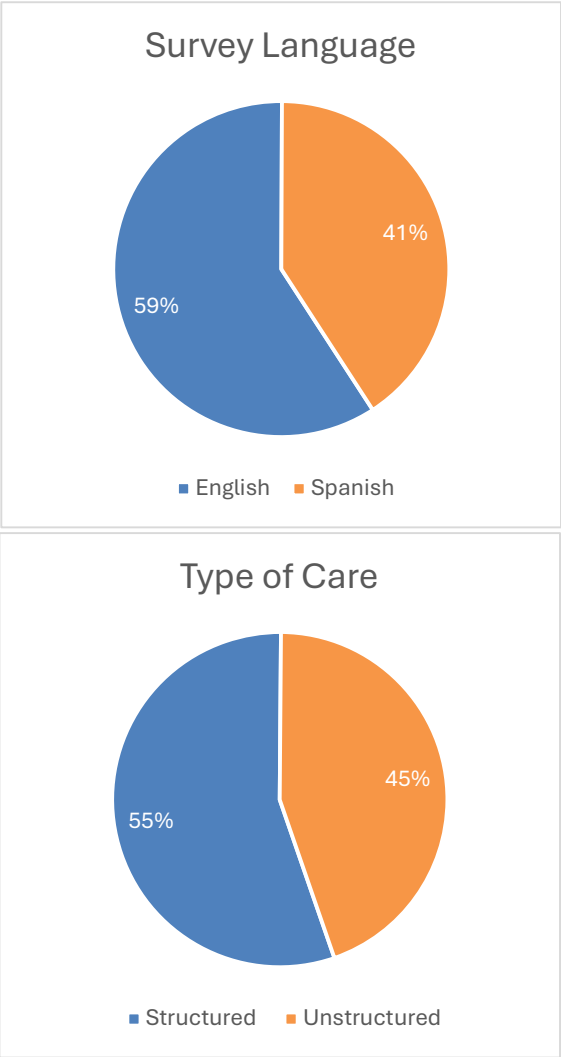
According to the Early Learning Landscape Report by Texas A&M University–San Antonio (2024), “Some families who participated in focus-group interviews indicated that they wanted care options that maintained family languages or exposed their child to different languages” (p. 21). This supports our finding that 41% of Westside Pilot surveys were completed in Spanish and that language accessibility remains a key design need. The results reinforce the need for fully bilingual approaches across all outreach, enrollment, and resource platforms.

### Type of Care Arrangement

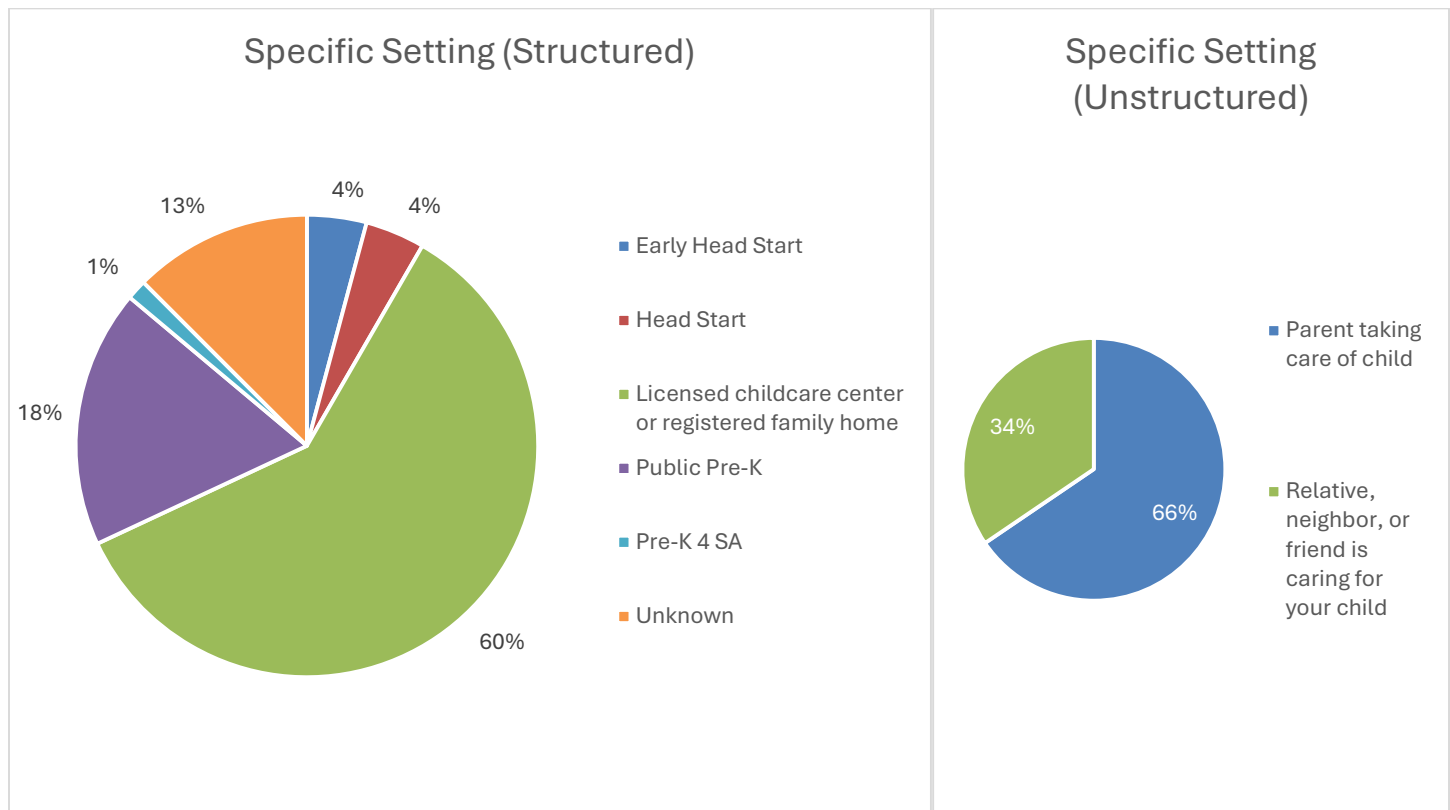
When asked whether their child(ren) were currently enrolled in a childcare setting or early education arrangement, 55% of respondents (n = 72) reported using structured care, which includes licensed childcare centers, registered family homes, and publicly funded programs such as Public Pre-K, Pre-K 4 SA, Head Start, or Early Head Start. The remaining 45% (n = 58) were using unstructured care—informal arrangements such as relatives, friends, or parents caring for children at home.

This classification followed a household-level approach: in cases where a household reported both structured and unstructured care for multiple children, they were categorized as structured, reflecting their connection to the formal early education system.

The near-even split highlights the complexity of childcare access in ZIP code 78237. It also validates the need to engage both structured and unstructured care households in outreach efforts, resource design, and system planning. Families relying on informal care make up a significant portion of the community and often fall outside the reach of traditional systems — yet their perspectives are critical to understanding unmet needs and building more inclusive infrastructure.



This community-level snapshot supports Early Matters’ broader impact goal: ensuring that every family is connected to early learning and development from birth, regardless of their current caregiving arrangement.



### *Specific Care Setting*

Families using structured care reported a range of settings, though the majority were enrolled in licensed childcare centers or registered family homes. Others indicated enrollment in Public Pre-K programs, as well as Head Start or Early Head Start. A few specifically identified Pre-K 4 SA. Among families in unstructured care, most were caring for their children at home themselves, while others relied on relatives, neighbors, or friends. This mix of settings highlights both the reach of formal programs and the continued reliance on informal networks to meet early care needs.

### *Top Priorities in Choosing Daytime Care*

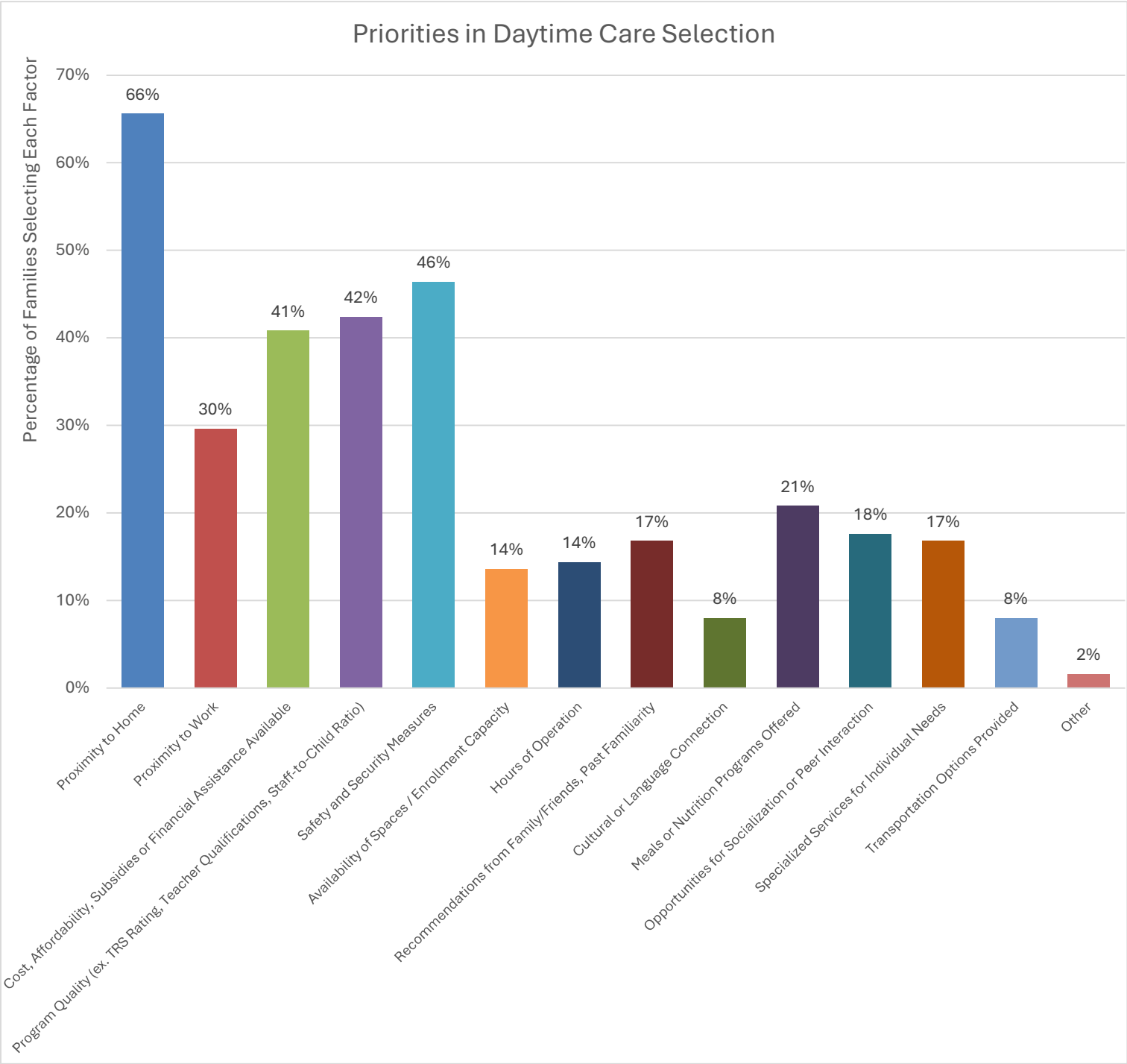
When asked to select the top priority factors that influenced their choice of daytime care, families across structured and unstructured care settings shared overlapping priority factors, though the frequency of selection varied by group. Because families could select multiple options, the percentages reflect the share of respondents who selected each individual factor—not ranked or exclusive choices.

Across both groups, proximity to home was the most frequently selected factor (66%), followed by safety and security measures (46%), program quality (42%), and affordability or access to financial assistance (41%). While these selections point to the importance of convenience and structural access, they also suggest that families are seeking stable, trustworthy environments where their children can grow and be safe.

Looking more closely, families in structured care settings more frequently emphasized program quality (46%), reflecting a possible greater familiarity with formal program structures and evaluation criteria. In contrast, unstructured care families more frequently selected cost (53%), hours of operation (33%), and safety (58%)—

which was notably almost on par with proximity to home. Given that these families are not currently enrolled in a paid childcare setting, their emphasis on affordability may signal a key reason they are not accessing structured care. The average annual cost of childcare in Texas—\$10,000 per child—exceeds the cost of in-state college tuition, creating a significant barrier for families, particularly those with young children and limited financial flexibility.

This distribution suggests that while proximity and safety are consistently prioritized across care types, structured care users may be more focused on quality metrics in part because they are already navigating those systems. Unstructured care families, on the other hand, are likely weighing real constraints—not only financial, but also logistical and relational—that shape their access to available options. These distinctions reinforce the need for early learning systems to address both family values and structural barriers when designing supports, outreach, and resource tools.





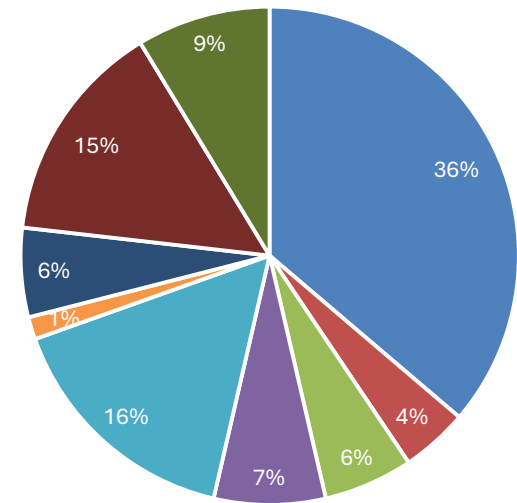
Pathways to Childcare Enrollment

Among families enrolled in structured care settings, the most common way they learned about their program was through personal connections. A recommendation from a friend or family member was the top source (36%), followed by referrals from another organization such as a school or nonprofit (16%). Another 15% of families indicated they were already familiar with the center, often because an older child had previously attended.

Smaller shares of families cited discovering their center through community events (7%), word of mouth (6%), or online searches (6%). Social media (4%) and flyers or advertisements (1%) were rarely selected. While these numbers suggest that relational networks currently play the largest role in driving enrollment, they may also point to limitations in the visibility and effectiveness of digital outreach strategies, rather than a lack of digital interest among families.

Later findings in this survey show that social media was the top platform selected overall by families seeking information about early learning and care options, with particularly high use among those in unstructured care settings. This indicates a disconnect: families are actively looking online, but digital tools and campaigns may not be reaching them in a clear, engaging, or actionable way. As San Antonio continues to build centralized resources like the Pre-K Enrollment Campaign and the comprehensive search tool being developed by Early Matters, this insight underscores the need to strengthen the design, promotion, and alignment of digital platforms with the real habits and preferences of families.

How Families Found Their Child’s Program



- Friend or Family Recommendation
- Social Media
- Online Search (e.g., Google)
- Community Event or outreach
- Referral from Another Organization (ex. School, Nonprofit)
- Flyer or Advertisement
- Word of Mouth
- Already Familiar with the Center (ex. Previous Child Attended)
- Other



## Parent Familiarity with Teacher

Among families using structured care, the vast majority — 88% — reported that they knew their child’s teacher’s name, while 12% did not. This high rate of teacher recognition may reflect strong communication between caregivers and families or the consistency of assigned teaching staff.

At the same time, the 12% who did not know their child’s teacher suggests there may be opportunities to strengthen how families are connected with the educators in their child’s setting. As later questions explored, the depth of family-teacher relationships can vary significantly — and knowing a teacher’s name is only one small indicator of broader family engagement.

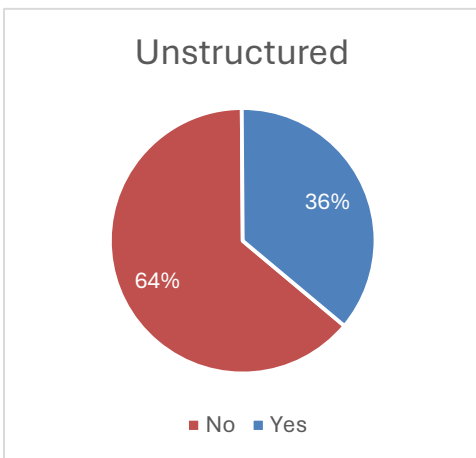
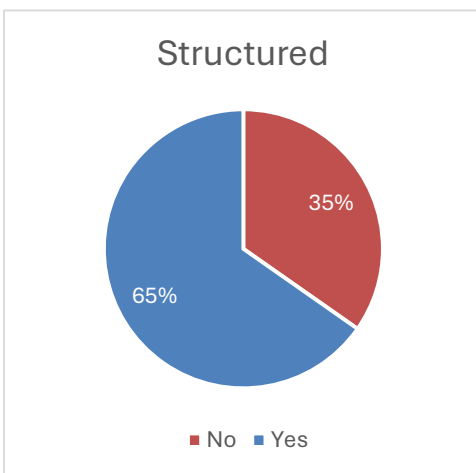
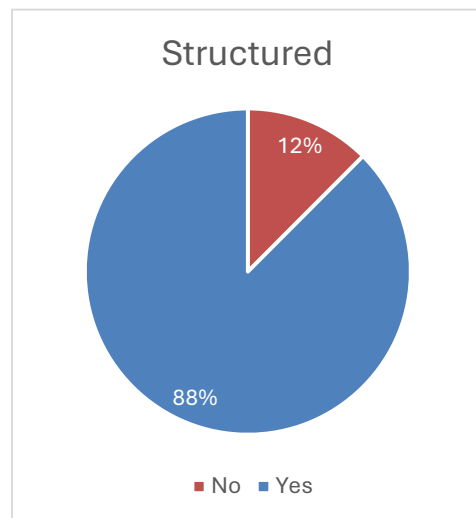
## Awareness of Enrollment Campaigns

Across all respondents, awareness of childcare or early learning enrollment campaigns was mixed, with the sample split nearly evenly — 52% reported being aware, while 48% said they were not. However, a clear difference emerged between families using structured and unstructured care.

Among families in structured care, 65% said they were aware of enrollment campaigns or programs that help with enrolling. In contrast, only 36% of unstructured care families reported the same. The fact that nearly two-thirds of unstructured care families were unaware of these resources suggests an ongoing challenge in reaching families who are not already connected to formal early education systems.

This disconnect does not necessarily indicate a lack of effort — rather, it highlights a gap between how families are currently searching for information and how enrollment campaigns are structured. The Family Engagement vision in the Early Matters Impact Plan calls for tools that empower families to actively search for and choose the early learning option that best fits their needs — whether structured or informal. Campaigns like the Pre-K Enrollment Campaign, along with similar initiatives across the community, remain a vital part of this landscape — especially during a broader shift toward centralized, family-centered infrastructure.

What the data suggests is not that campaigns are ineffective, but that there is still untapped potential in how digital tools are designed and implemented. Families are actively using platforms like social media to seek out information — yet awareness of enrollment supports remains uneven. Earlier survey responses showed that most families find their care through relational networks like friends, family, or trusted organizations. The opportunity now is to build digital tools that function more like those networks: familiar, far-reaching, and grounded in trust. That means moving from one-time efforts to coordinated, integrated tools that align with how families navigate decisions — through the people, platforms, and spaces they already rely on.



# SEARCH TOOL

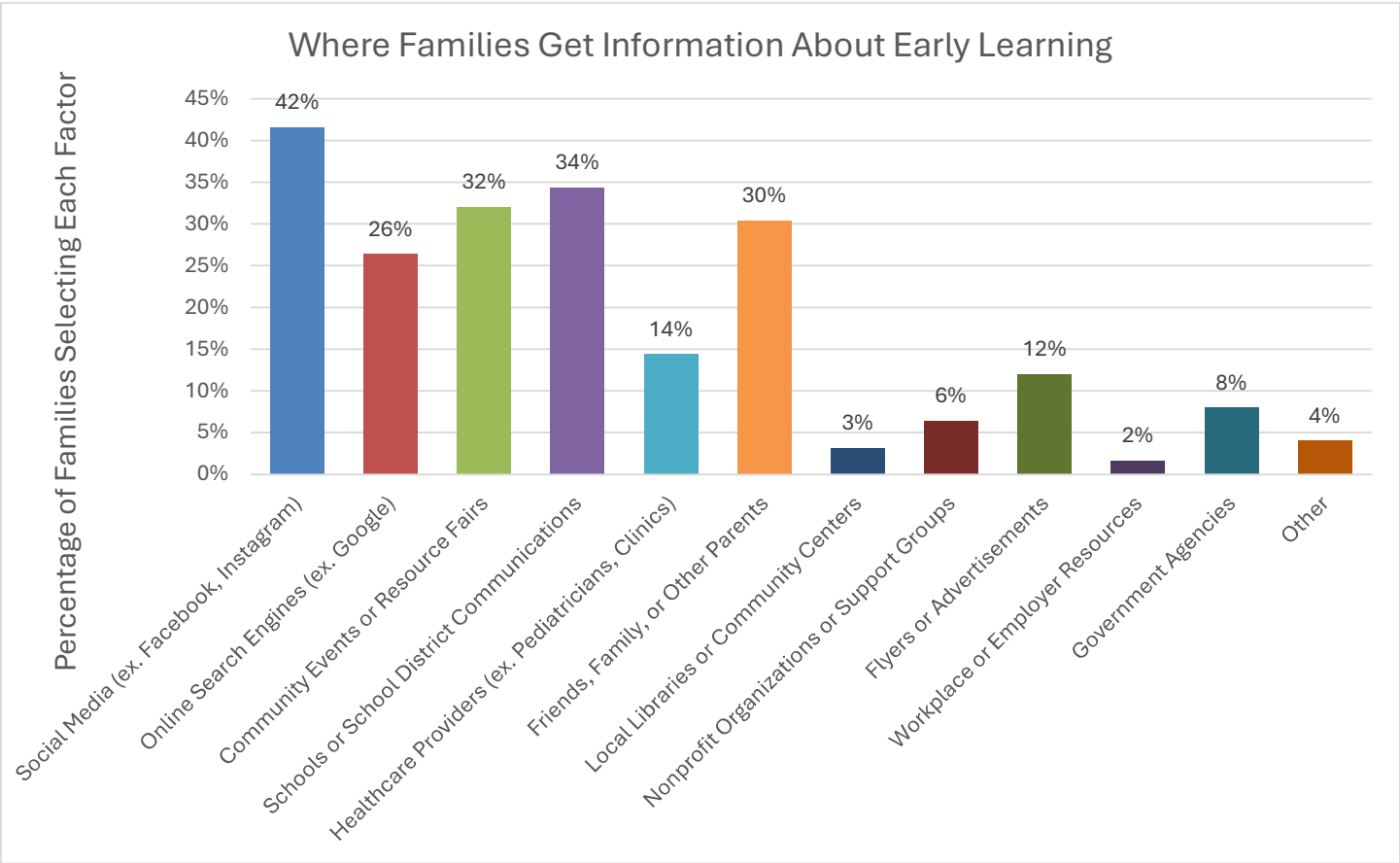
## Where Families Get Information

When asked where they typically receive information about early learning and childcare programs, families cited a wide range of sources—reflecting the ongoing importance of a multimodal approach to outreach. Among all respondents, the most frequently selected individual source was social media (42%), followed by schools or school district communications (34%), community events or resource fairs (32%), and friends or family (30%).

Patterns differed notably between structured and unstructured care groups. Families using unstructured care selected social media at higher rates (59%) than structured families (28%), suggesting a heavier reliance on the digital ecosystem to access information about early learning and program choices among those not yet engaged with formal institutions. Structured families, by contrast, most often cited community events (41%) and school-based communication (38%) as their primary sources of information. Still, digital platforms, particularly social media and search engines—were among the top sources for both groups.

This finding reinforces that digital and social tools are not just supplemental—they are essential. While personal referrals, trusted institutions, and community events remain valuable, the consistent and growing use of digital sources points to an opportunity to strengthen outreach in these spaces. As the Family Engagement vision in the Early Matters Impact Plan emphasizes, families should be able to search intentionally and access information easily, regardless of where they start.

These results suggest a need not to replace traditional and existing outreach, but to strategically enhance digital pathways—ensuring they are visible, actionable, and aligned with the real habits and preferences of families navigating early learning decisions.

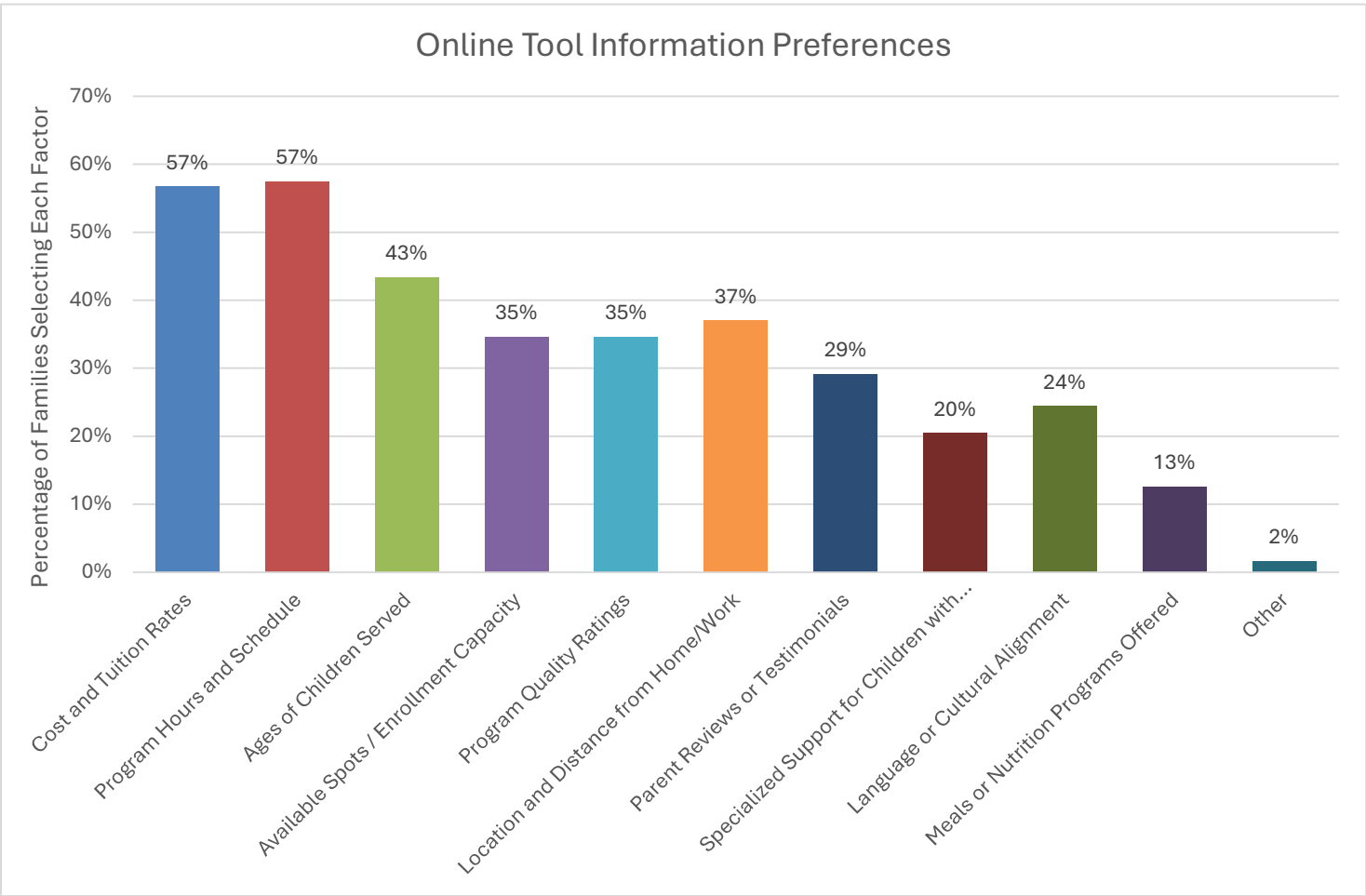
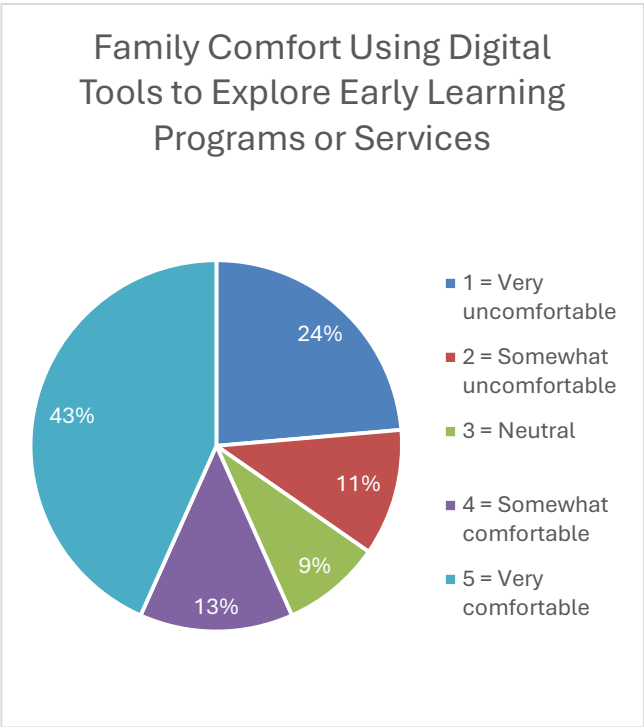




Search Tool Access and Design: What Families Need

Families across both structured and unstructured care settings expressed a mix of confidence and caution when it comes to finding early learning options online. While internet access is nearly universal (92%), fewer families own a computer, and comfort using online tools varies. About 43% of all respondents said they are very comfortable using online tools to search for programs, while 35% reported some level of discomfort (24% very uncomfortable, 11% somewhat uncomfortable). The remaining 9% were neutral. This suggests that families lean slightly more toward digital confidence, but a substantial share still faces barriers. Designing tools that are intuitive, mobile-friendly, and paired with human support remains essential.

Still, families are clearly ready to engage online when the tools are built to match their needs. When asked what information a digital search tool should include, the most commonly selected preferences across both structured and unstructured care settings were cost and tuition rates and program hours and schedules, each selected by 57% of families. Following those, preferences spread across several other important categories, including ages of children served, available spots or enrollment capacity, location convenience, program quality ratings, and parent reviews.

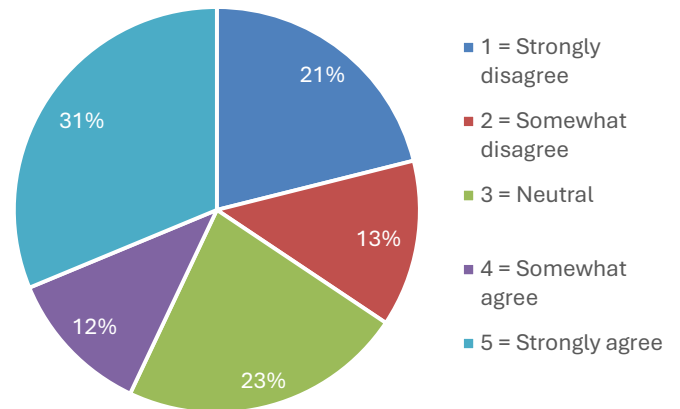


While there was some variation in response rates, the overall distribution suggests that families are looking for comprehensive, trustworthy information—not just one or two key details.

At the same time, when families were asked whether they agree there are enough affordable options in their area, responses were spread. About one-third strongly agreed, but roughly the same number disagreed or felt neutral, particularly among unstructured care families. This reflects a persistent sense of uncertainty around affordability—even among those who are actively participating in formal care.

Together, these insights reinforce what the Early Matters Family Engagement vision already names: families should be able to search intentionally and confidently, using tools that are simple, informative, and accessible across devices. A digital tool alone won't close the gap—families also need greater access to high-quality, affordable childcare—but it can become a powerful bridge, especially when paired with outreach and support that meets families where they are.

### "I Have Enough Affordable Early Learning Or Childcare Options In My Area"



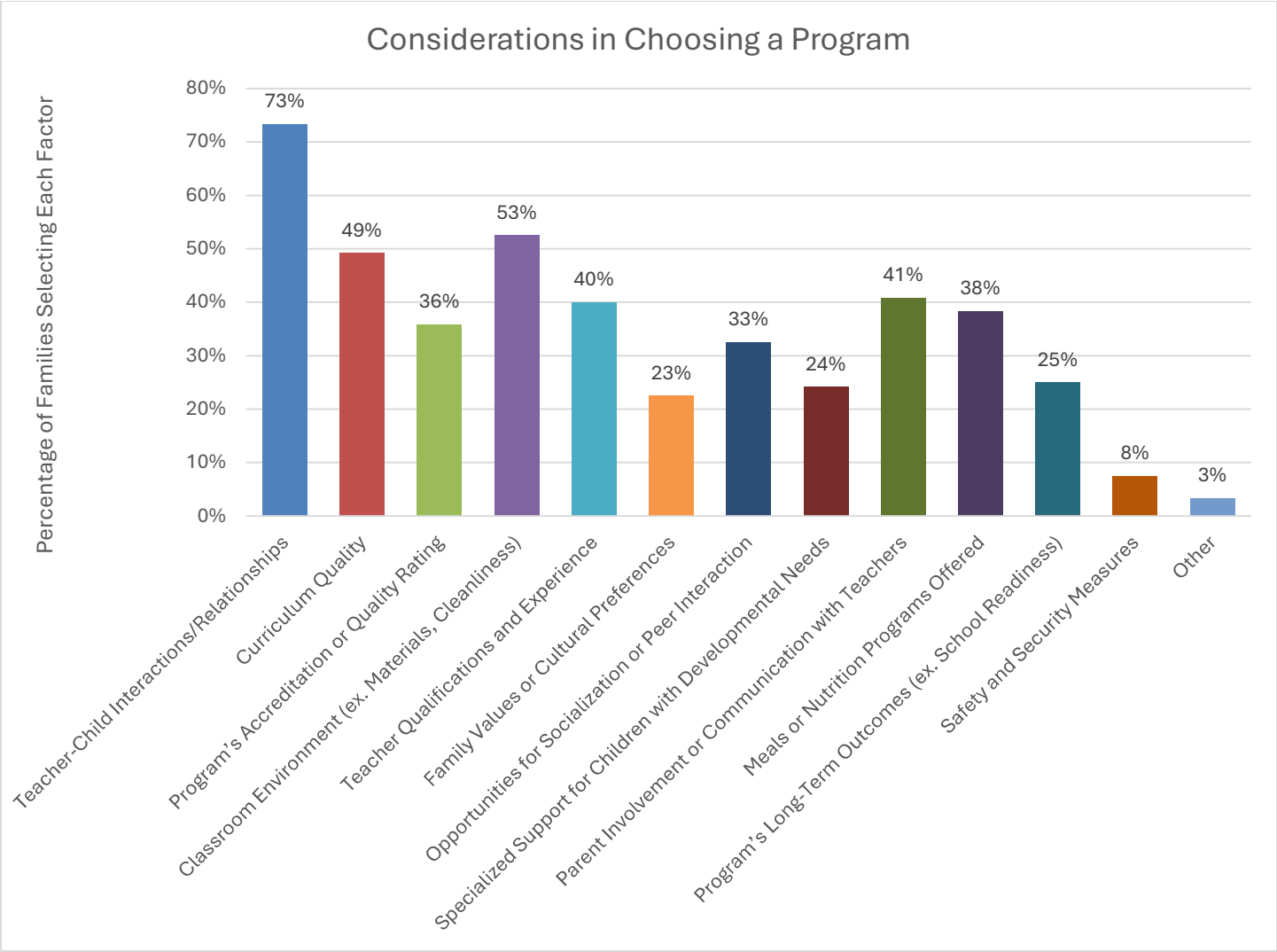
# CHILD-CENTERED PARTNERSHIP

## Decision Factors for Childcare and Early Learning Programs

When asked what factors are most important in deciding if a childcare or early learning program is right for their child, families overwhelmingly emphasized the importance of relationships and daily interactions. Teacher–child interactions and relationships were the most frequently selected consideration overall (73%)—far exceeding any other factor.

Other frequently selected factors included the classroom environment (53%), curriculum quality (49%), parent involvement or communication with educators (41%), and teacher qualifications and experience (40%). Together, these selections point to a shared value: emotional connection, developmental content, and the structure of care settings all matter deeply to families—alongside strong partnerships between educators and families.

Taken together, the responses reflect a shared desire for safe, nurturing, and enriching environments, alongside meaningful relationships between educators, children, and families. These insights reinforce the need for clear, accessible information about caregiver interaction, learning focus, and classroom environment—elements that may not always be obvious from a website or brochure but matter deeply to families making early learning decisions.





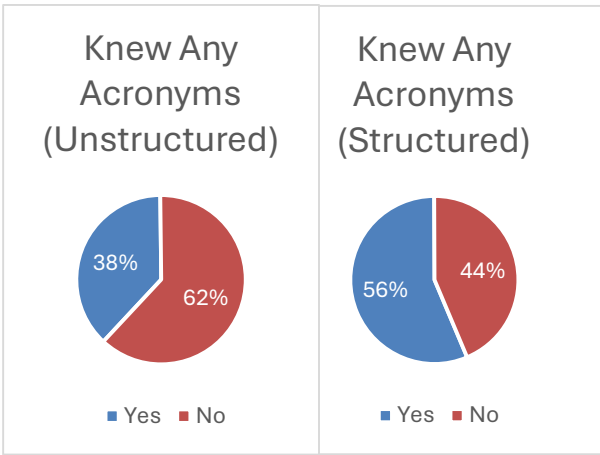
Acronym Awareness: TRS, CCS, and NAEYC

When asked whether they recognized any of three key acronyms related to early childhood education—TRS (Texas Rising Star), CCS (Child Care Services), and NAEYC (National Association for the Education of Young Children)—just over half (52%) of all respondents said yes. Structured care households were more likely to recognize at least one (56%) compared to unstructured care households (38%).

CCS was the most familiar term overall (48% structured; 33% unstructured), followed by TRS (23% structured; 14% unstructured). NAEYC was virtually unknown across both groups.

These results suggest that even among families actively engaged in formal childcare settings, awareness of key quality and support systems remains mixed. For families not connected to structured care, these terms may feel even more opaque or irrelevant. The findings highlight an opportunity to simplify, clarify, and humanize how we talk about quality—ensuring that families not only receive information but understand what it means and how it applies to them.

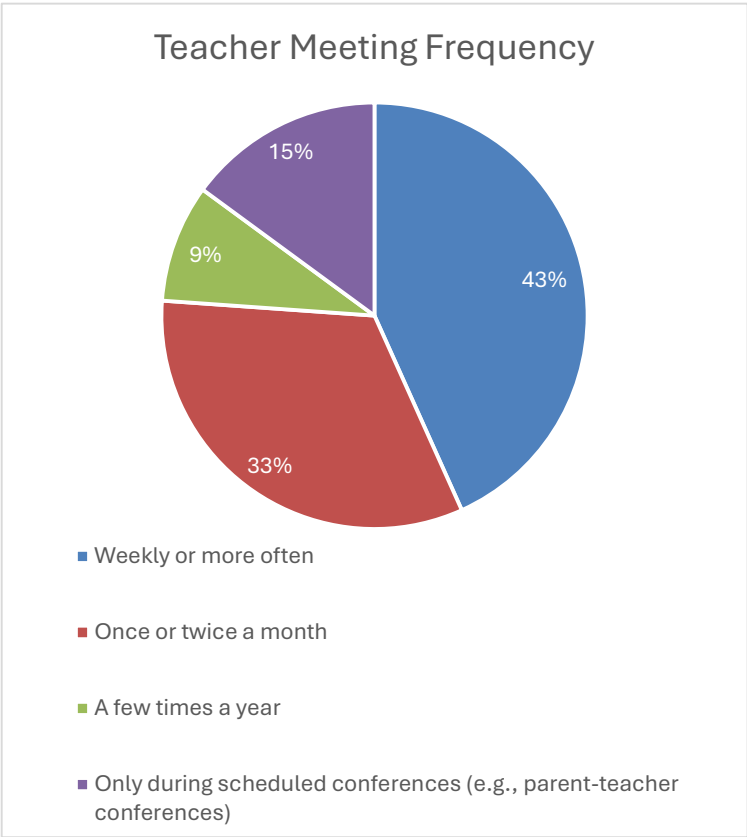
This gap in recognition reflects a broader need for comprehensive community-wide awareness efforts that go beyond surface-level outreach. Earlier data in this report showed that while digital tools like social media are widely used, trusted personal networks remain central to how families navigate early learning decisions. Raising awareness of resources and quality indicators like CCS, TRS, and NAEYC will likely require a combination of both—embedding information into the places families already turn to for guidance, whether online or in person. Efforts should focus not just on naming these programs, but on helping families understand what they mean and why they matter.



Family-Educator Relationships and Communication

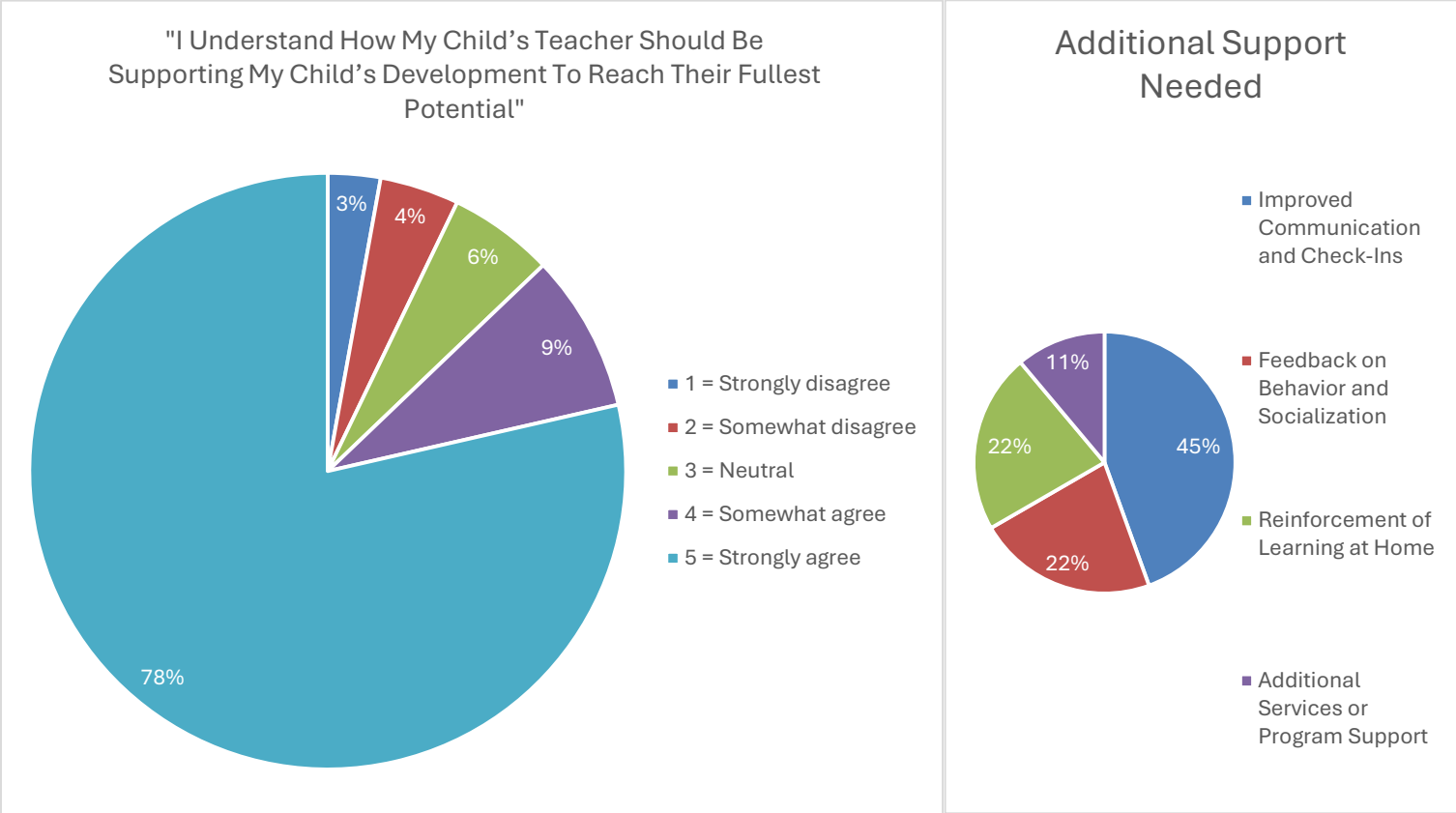
Among families in structured care, communication with teachers appears regular and meaningful for many. A combined 76% reported meeting with their child’s teacher weekly or once or twice a month, suggesting frequent connection around progress and development. Additionally, 69% strongly agreed that they know how to advocate for their child, and another 69% strongly agreed they have opportunities to learn from their child’s teacher and receive resources to support learning at home.

Still, some families expressed a desire for more support. In response to an open-ended question, 25% of respondents shared areas where they would like additional guidance to understand how their child is doing and advocate for them—ranging from improved communication and consistent check-ins to clearer feedback on behavior, reinforcement strategies for home, and access to additional services or program support.



The final question in this series further affirmed confidence in family–teacher alignment: 78% strongly agreed that they understand how their child’s teacher should be supporting their child’s development.

Together, these responses reflect strong foundational trust between families and educators among those currently connected to structured care—paired with a desire for more collaborative, two-way communication to support children’s growth in and beyond the classroom.



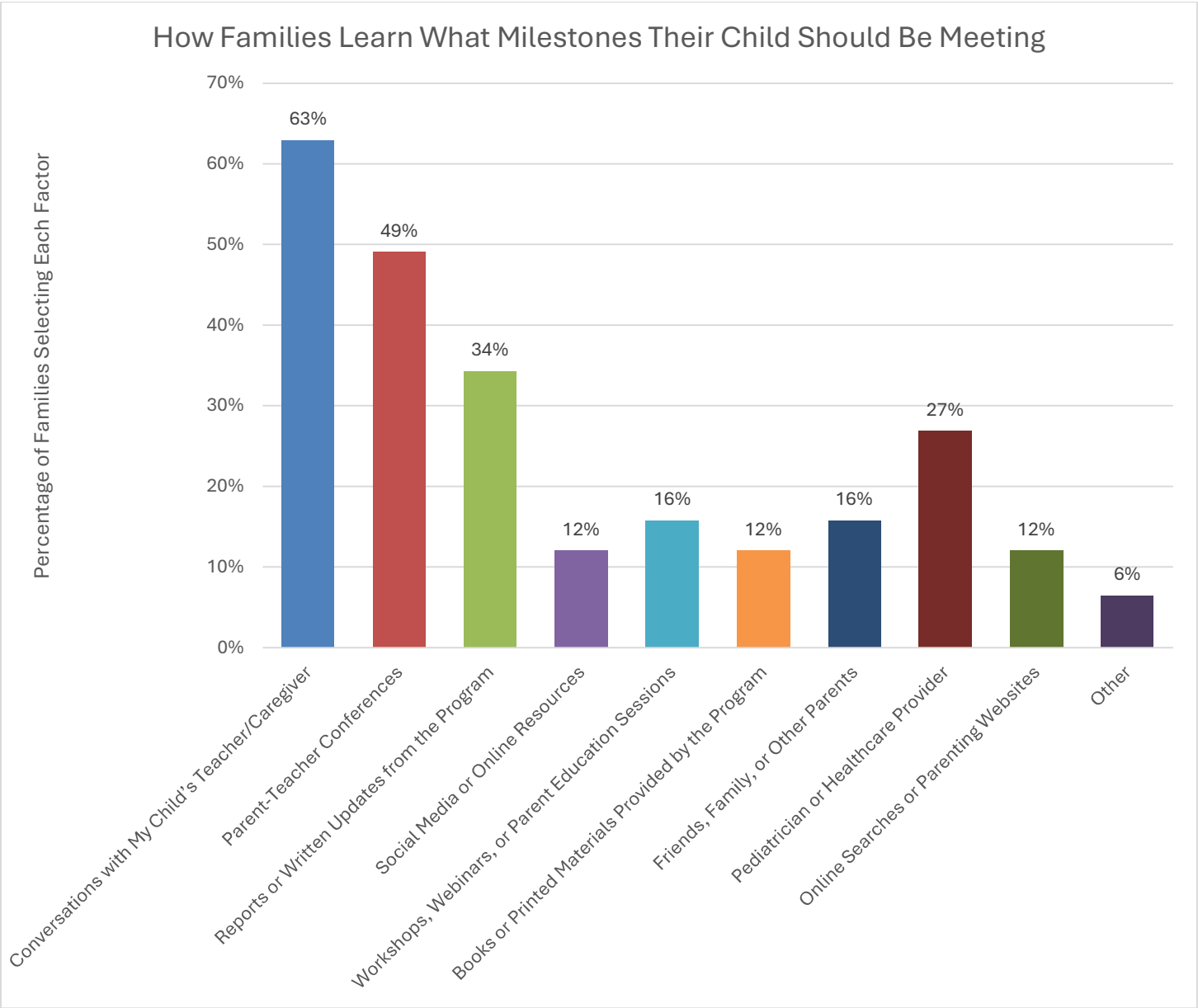
DEMAND FOR QUALITY

Understanding Child Development: How Families Learn About Milestones

Structured care families most commonly cited conversations with their child’s teacher or caregiver (71%) and parent–teacher conferences (56%) as their primary sources of developmental information—highlighting the central role that early educators play in shaping developmental understanding.

For families not currently enrolled in structured care, the most frequently selected source was pediatricians or healthcare providers (55%), followed by educator-connected sources such as teacher conversations (47%) and parent–teacher conferences (37%). This blend of selections reflects the importance of both medical and educational voices in early development—especially for families navigating care outside of formal programs.

These patterns underscore the importance of ensuring that wherever families turn—whether in educational, medical, or community settings—they have access to accurate, timely, and culturally attuned developmental guidance. In this way, quality is not just about programs themselves, but about the ecosystem of supports surrounding families.





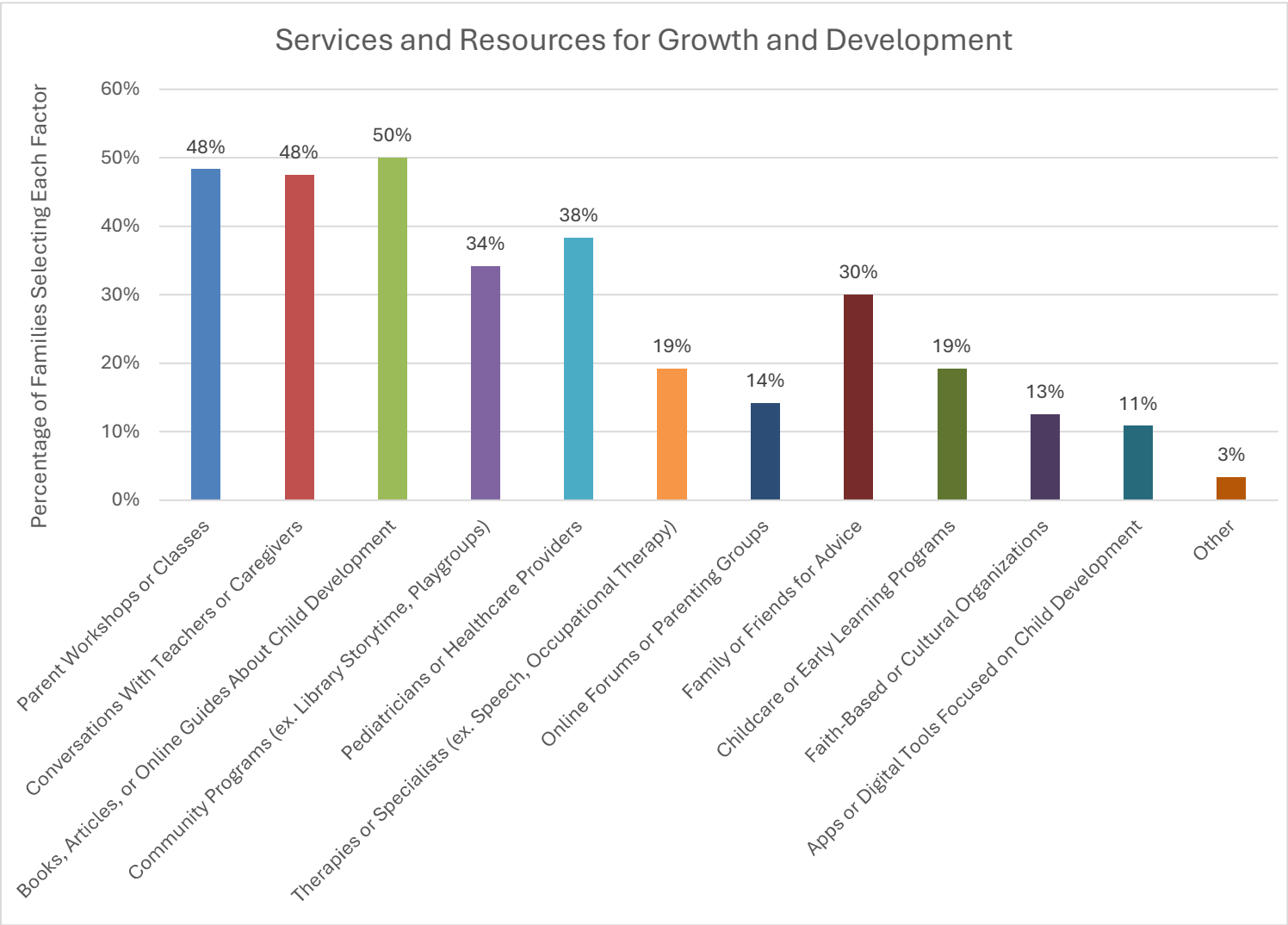
# WRAPAROUND SERVICES

## Services and Resources for Supporting Development

Families draw on a broad mix of resources to support their children’s growth—spanning educational, healthcare, and community systems. Among all respondents, the most commonly selected supports were books, articles, or online guides about child development (50%), parent workshops or classes (48%), and conversations with teachers or caregivers (48%).

Patterns differed by care type, though engagement was broad and multifaceted, pointing to families’ desire for guidance that spans educational, medical, and community systems. Structured families most frequently selected educator-driven supports—including workshops (59%), teacher conversations (59%), and books or articles (54%). Unstructured families, meanwhile, more commonly turned to pediatricians or healthcare providers (45%) and family or friends for advice (37%), though books/guides (45%) and workshops (33%) still ranked among their most selected sources. This reflects meaningful overlap between groups, alongside important distinctions in access points.

These findings align with the Wraparound Resources domain of the Early Matters Impact Plan, which emphasizes connecting families to comprehensive systems of support. From community libraries to pediatric clinics to trusted caregivers, supporting families in all their access points is key to building a more responsive early learning ecosystem.



In addition to asking where families currently receive developmental guidance, the Westside Pilot also explored what supports families wish they had. When asked what additional services or information would help them better understand and advocate for their child’s growth, responses centered on five core themes: expanded childcare access and coverage (25%), family and parenting support services (30%), affordability and inclusive program eligibility (15%), health and specialized services (20%), and overall community wellness and lifestyle (10%). These needs point to a holistic vision of child development—one that includes, but extends far beyond, the classroom. They also affirm the importance of integrated wraparound systems that respond to real family priorities.

Notably, 89% of families reported that the resources they currently receive are available in both Spanish and English—a positive indicator of linguistic inclusion within 78237, even as we recognize this level of access is not yet the norm across all communities.

These responses affirm the importance of integrated wraparound systems that reflect real family priorities and ensure accessibility not only in content, but in language and trust.

## LOOKING AHEAD

The Westside Pilot was built on the belief that families are experts in their own experiences—and that listening carefully to their insights is essential to building a more equitable early childhood system. The findings offer a clear message: families want relationships they can trust, systems they can navigate, and resources that reflect their day-to-day realities. As Early Matters San Antonio continues its work, this project provides a foundation for strengthening community partnerships, shaping strategies that reflect lived experience, and supporting policies that reach all families—regardless of their care arrangement or starting point.

While the initial proposal included a projection for scaling this work, the field-based realities suggest that future efforts may benefit from a more stratified sampling model. Any expansion should remain rooted in the core values of this pilot—relational trust, cultural and linguistic accessibility, and a commitment to honoring the full range of family voices across Bexar County.

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