



UNDERSTANDING THE EARLY YEARS: SURVEY OF PARENTS WITH CHILDREN UNDER SIX

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UNDERSTANDING THE EARLY YEARS

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.0 METHODOLOGY	3
1.1 COLLECTION	3
1.2 MARGIN OF ERROR	4
1.2 DESCRIBING THE SURVEY SAMPLE	5
2.0 DETAILED RESULTS	7
2.1 CURRENT AND INTENDED PRESCHOOL ATTENDANCE	7
2.2 BARRIERS AND OBSTACLES TO ATTENDING PRESCHOOL	9
2.3 AWARENESS AND USAGE OF PARENT AND CHILD-SUPPORT SERVICES	11
2.4 FACTORS PREVENTING OR LIMITING USE OF SUPPORT SERVICES	17
2.5 AVAILABILITY OF INFORMATION RESOURCES	31
2.6 SAFETY IN THE COMMUNITY	37
3.0 APPENDIX A: RESPONSES TO OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS	41
4.0 APPENDIX B: COMMUNITY-LEVEL RESULTS (ALL QUESTIONS)	102
5.0 SURVEY INSTRUMENT	135

1.0 METHODOLOGY

1.1 Collection

The 395-sample telephone survey of Abbotsford parents was conducted over the four months from August to December, 2004. Initial attempts to collect a random sample from the Abbotsford telephone directory were discontinued due to low eligibility and response rates.

An alternative approach was formulated that involved members of the *Understanding the Early Years* team prerecruiting parents at various community events and family resources across Abbotsford. Any parent or guardian of one or more children under the age of six living in Abbotsford was eligible to participate in the subsequent. A total of 569 eligible individuals were successfully recruited to participate in the survey, from which 395 ultimately completed the telephone questionnaire.

Respondents were asked to provide the best day and time to be contacted with the survey to be considerate of the time constraints facing many parents. To encourage participation, successful respondents were entered into a random draw to win a prize.

Collection of the survey was undertaken by staff at *Understanding the Early Years*. Training and industry standard guidelines as to the proper administration of telephone surveying were provided by Sensus Research. To ensure the survey captured the ethnic diversity of families in Abbotsford, interviews were completed in both English and Punjabi. A total of 19% or 77 of the 395 surveys were completed with parents or guardians from households where Punjabi was spoken as the main or secondary language.

A total of 48 questions were asked of respondents and the completed surveys were then sent to Sensus Research for processing, editing, cleaning, and statistical analysis. A final summary of the call results is presented below:

Call Disposition	Total	Percent
Total prerecruits	569	100.0%
<i>Refused / No contact made</i>	<i>174</i>	<i>30.6%</i>
Total completes	395	69.4%

1.2 Margin Of Error


The results of a 395-sample survey are considered accurate to within $\pm 4.9\%$ of what a census (a poll of everyone in the survey population) would show. In other words, if all Abbotsford parents / guardians with children under the age of six were surveyed, the results of *that* poll would be within 4.9 percentage points of the results of *this* one, 19 times out of 20.

To facilitate greater interpretation of the findings, the survey results are presented for five separate communities within Abbotsford. The communities include: Abbotsford, Towline Hill, South Clearbrook, Sandy Hill, and Old Clayburn. When examining the results pertaining to these communities on their own, the margin of error is as follows:

Region	Sample Size	Margin of Error
City of Abbotsford	395	$\pm 4.9\%$
<i>Abbotsford</i>	53	$\pm 13.5\%$
<i>Towline Hill</i>	52	$\pm 13.6\%$
<i>South Clearbrook</i>	35	$\pm 16.6\%$
<i>Sandy Hill</i>	33	$\pm 17.1\%$
<i>Old Clayburn</i>	33	$\pm 17.1\%$

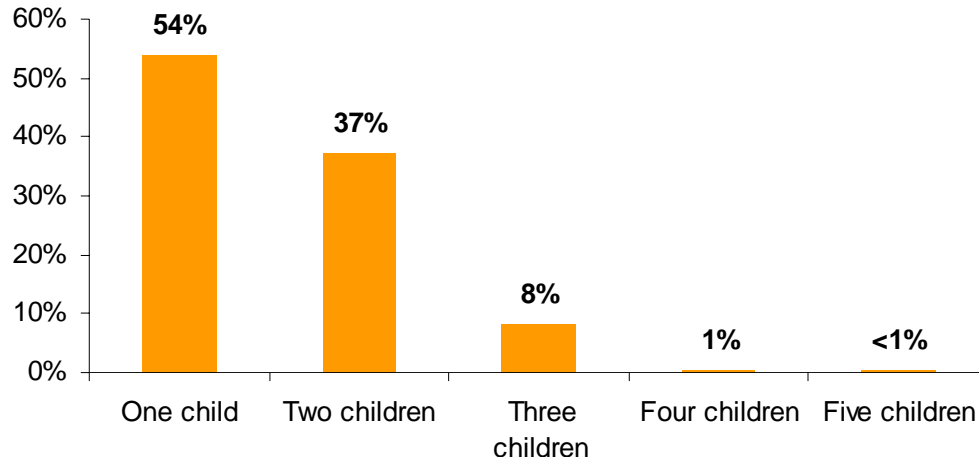
Surveys not falling within one of these regions are included as part of the overall survey results but are not shown as part of the community-level findings.

1.3 Significance Testing

Tests of statistical significance describe whether a characteristic or phenomenon observed in one population exists in a similar level in another or not. By default, the test assumes that no difference exists. Only when a difference is detected of such magnitude as to strongly preclude being due to survey error do we say that it is a "real" or significant difference. Such differences are shown by circling the lower / higher value with a  and marking all values from which it differs significantly with an asterix (*). Different colours are used to show multiple differences within a row.

1.3 DESCRIBING THE SURVEY SAMPLE

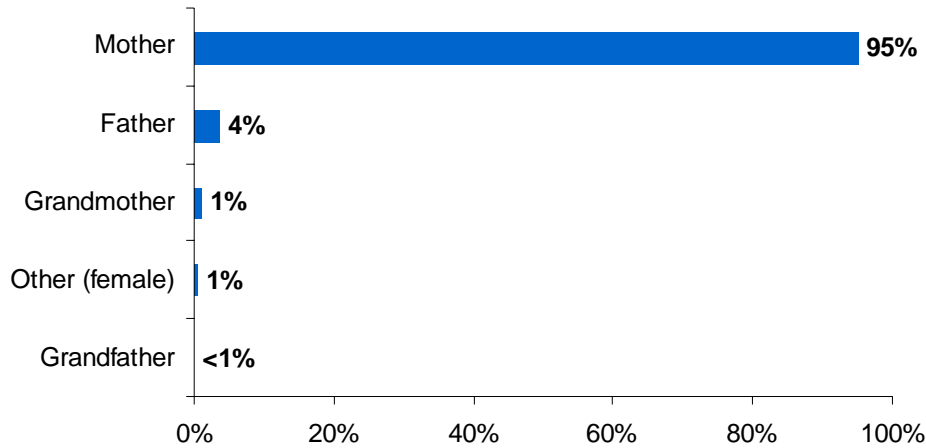
Q1. To begin, how many children do you have or care for that are under the age of six?



- The survey spoke to parents and caregivers with children under the age of six. The majority of families surveyed have less than three children at this age (91%), with the majority having only a single child under six (54%).
- Across communities, parents in Townline hill have significantly more single child (under six) households than anywhere else but South Clearbrook.

Number of children under the age of six	Community Break-Out				
	Abbotsford (n=53)	Townline Hill (n=52)	South Clearbrook (n=35)	Sandy Hill (n=33)	Old Clayburn (n=32)
One child	47.2%*	69.2%	62.9%	45.5%*	46.9%*
Two children	43.4%	30.8%	28.6%	45.5%	46.9%
Three children	7.5%	0.0%	8.6%	9.1%	6.3%
Four or more children	1.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

Q2. And what is your relationship to this child(ren)?



- Although a great many parents today share equally in the care of their children, this survey spoke primarily to mothers (95%) and captured the challenges and concerns from their points of view.
- Similarly, numerous grandparents also contribute to the care of their grandchildren, however very few are represented in this survey.

Q20. Abbotsford Community

Abbotsford	13.4%	North Clearbrook	6.6%	Babich	3.0%
Townline Hill	13.2%	Clearbrook	5.8%	Sumas Prairie	1.8%
South Clearbrook	8.9%	Unspecified	5.1%	Matsqui Prairie	1.5%
Old Clayburn	8.4%	Kilgaard	4.8%	Mount Lehman	1.5%
Sandy Hill	8.4%	South Poplar	4.8%	Airport - Aberdeen	1.3%
McMillan	7.3%	West Clearbrook	4.3%		

- True to its aim to provide a wide coverage of parents from all across Abbotsford, the survey sample is distributed relatively evenly across sixteen different communities in the city. The highest proportions come from Abbotsford and Townline Hill (13%) while the smallest are drawn from Airport-Aberdeen (1%).

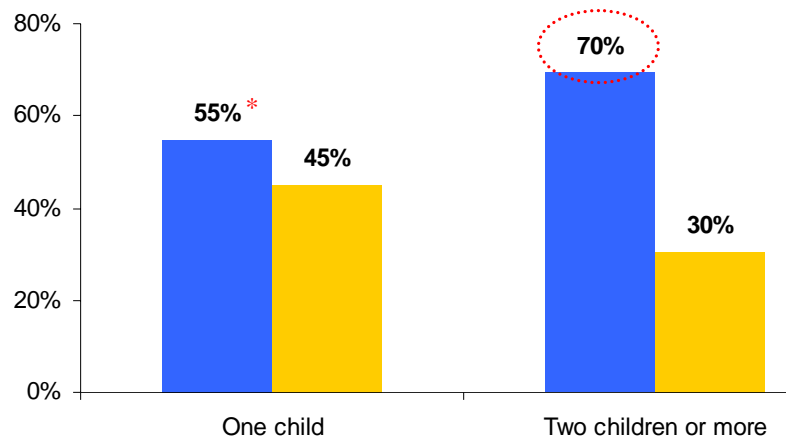
2.0 DETAILED RESULTS

2.1 Current and intended attendance of preschool

Q3. Have any of your children attended, or will they attend, a daycare or preschool program?	Percent (n=377)	Respondents
Children <i>do or will attend preschool</i> but not daycare	46.2%	174
Children <i>do not or will not attend preschool</i> nor daycare	27.3%	103
Children <i>do or will attend both preschool and daycare</i>	15.4%	58
Children <i>do or will attend daycare</i> but not preschool	11.1%	42

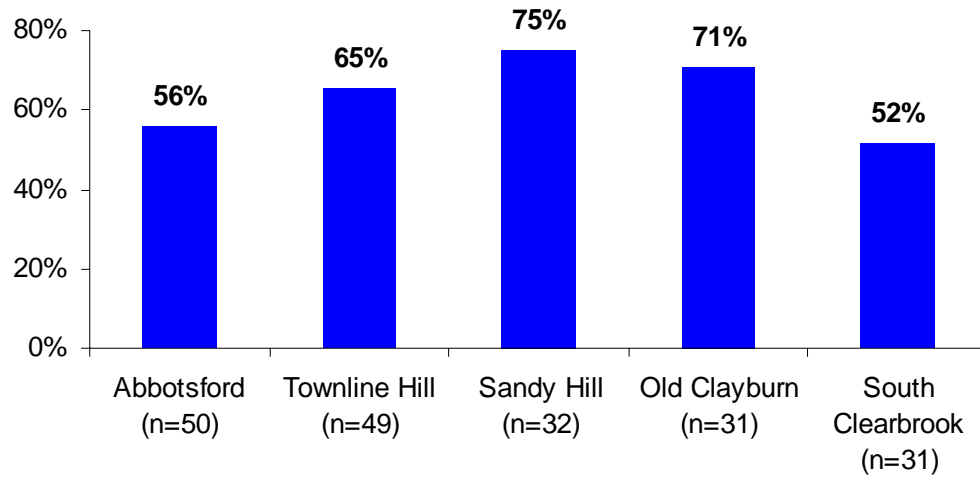
- Overall, more than six in ten parents surveyed have their child(ren) enrolled in a preschool program or intend to when their child is old enough to attend.
- Considerably fewer parents actually have or intend to have their child(ren) enrolled in a daycare program. Just 27% of parents surveyed indicated this intention, with 15% intending to have their child(ren) in *neither* daycare nor preschool.

- Have or intend to have child(ren) attend preschool
- Do not have or intend to have child(ren) attend preschool



- Interestingly, parents with only a single child are significantly less likely to have their child enrol in preschool (55%) than parents with two or more children (70%). It is possible that having additional children impels parents to seek outside assistance, such as a preschool program, to help handle the extra work load. Ironically, having children of different ages was listed frequently as a reason that they *did not* have their child(ren) attending preschool.

Preschool attendance at the community level





At the community level, there appears to be some slight variation in preschool attendance, although not enough to be considered significant.


2.2 Barriers and obstacles to attending pre-school


Q4a. We would like to better understand the challenges involved in having children participate in preschool programs. What challenges, if any, do you and your child(ren) face in having them participate in a preschool program?	Parents of children that do attend or intend to attend preschool (n=194)
None / Nothing / No challenges	43.3%
Other (refer to Appendix A)	21.1%
Cost / parent fees too high	21.1%
Hours do not work for my schedule	14.4%
Transportation issues (poor transit / do not have vehicle)	9.3%
Located too far away	2.6%
Lack of information / do not know enough about it	2.1%
Not a priority for our family	1.5%
Language barriers	1.0%
Lack of time to use it	0.5%
No space available / was full	0.5%
I stay home / I prefer my child at home with me	0.5%

Please note that the valid sample size at the community level is too small to provide reliable results (refer to Appendix B).

-  Nearly half (43%) of parents who do or intend to have their child(ren) in preschool report having no challenges or obstacles to having their children participate.


-  Cost represents the single largest barrier to attendance or more frequent attendance, with more than 1 in 5 parents identifying it as an obstacle or challenge.


-  Other common challenges include parents' schedules not aligning with that of the preschool (14%) and transportation issues (9%).


-  Other concerns or challenges mentioned less frequently include finding the "right" school, potty training their child first, separation issues, and conflicting schedules with older or younger siblings.

Q4b. We would like to better understand the obstacles facing caregivers in having their children participate in preschool programs. What would you say are the main reasons that they do not attend or are not able to attend a preschool program?	Parents of children that do not attend or intend to attend preschool (n=140)
Cost / parent fees too high	27.1%
None / Nothing / No challenges	25.7%
Other (refer to Appendix A)	18.6%
I stay home / I prefer my child at home with me	16.4%
Not a priority for our family	12.1%
Transportation issues (poor transit / do not have vehicle)	9.3%
Hours do not work for my schedule	6.4%
Lack of time to use it	2.9%
Located too far away	2.1%
No space available / was full	2.1%
Children participate in other activities	2.1%
Lack of information / do not know enough about it	0.7%
Language barriers	0.7%

Please note that the valid sample size at the community level is too small to provide reliable results (refer to Appendix B).

-  Over half (54%) of those parents who *do not* have or intend to have their children attend preschool do so out of personal choice. A number of these parents (16%) believe that their child(ren) are better served by spending their formative years at home. In nearly all of these cases, one of the parents is able to stay at home and take on the role provided by preschool.

-  With this group, as with parents of children that do attend or intend to attend, cost is the single biggest obstacle, with more than 1 in 4 parents citing it as a challenge.

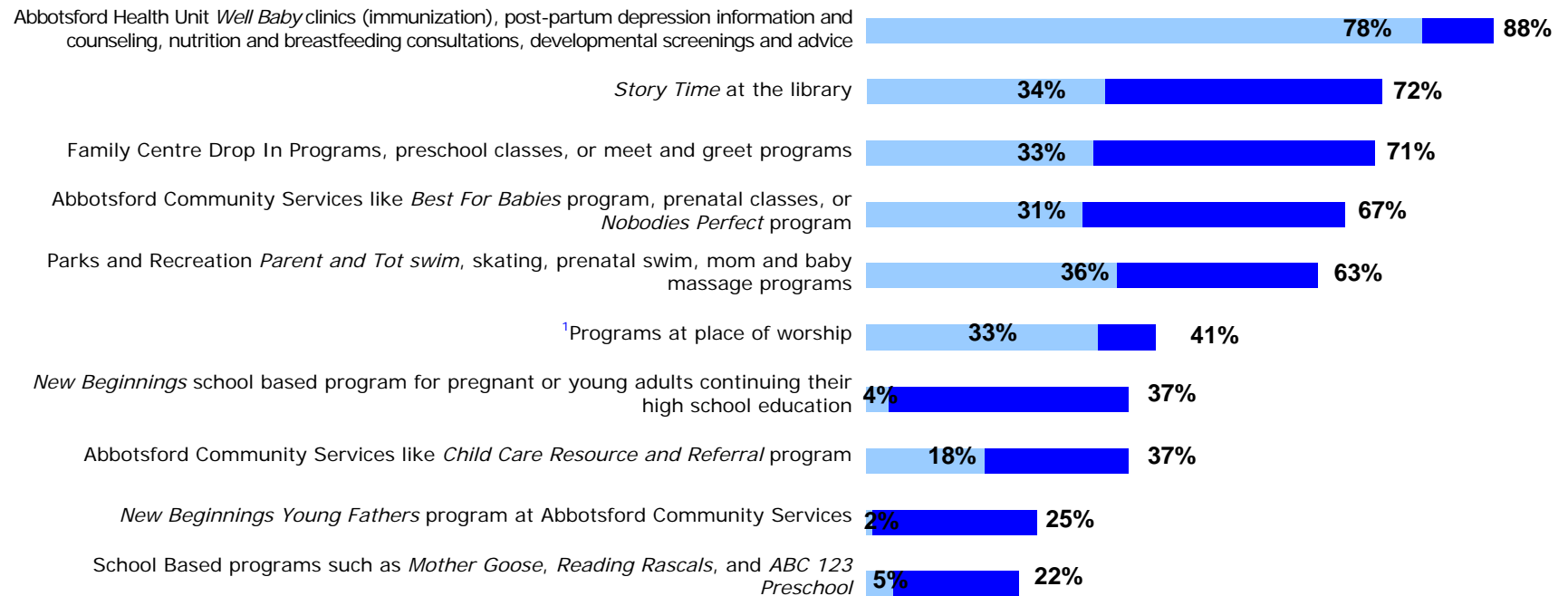
-  Other common challenges and barriers to attending are transportation issues (9%) and parents schedules conflicting with the preschool hours (6%).

2.3 Awareness and usage of parent and child-support services

Q6. I will now read out several activities, programs, and services in Abbotsford that are available for children up to the age of six and their caregivers. For each that I read, please tell me if you have ever heard of it before.

Q7. And have you or your child(ren) ever attended this program, even if just once?

● % indicating awareness of the program
 ● % indicating past or current use of the program



¹Please note that 21% of respondents indicated that they do not attend religious services or a place of worship.

Family Centre Drop In Programs, preschool classes, or Meet & Greet programs	Community Break-Out		
	% Aware	% Have attended	Valid sample (n)
Abbotsford	73.6%*	45.3%	53
Townline Hill	53.8%	28.8%	52
South Clearbrook	65.7%	42.9%	35
Old Clayburn	87.9%*	48.5%	33
Sandy Hill	81.8%*	27.3%	33

Even at the small sample sizes of these sub-groups, we are able to detect significant differences in awareness of programs across communities. In particular, parents in Townline Hill display significantly lower levels of awareness of Family Centre Drop-In programs than any other community areas except South Clearbrook.

Abbotsford Community Services like Best For Babies program, Prenatal classes, or Nobodies Perfect program	Community Break-Out		
	% Aware	% Have attended	Valid sample (n)
Abbotsford	75.5%*	34.0%	53
Townline Hill	50.0%	19.2%	52
South Clearbrook	80.0%*	28.6%	35
Old Clayburn	72.7%*	36.4%	33
Sandy Hill	72.7%*	36.4%	33

We see similar trends emerge for several Abbotsford Community Services programs, with parents in Townline Hill significantly less aware of these programs than those in any other community.

Abbotsford Community Services like Child Care Resource & Referral program	Community Break-Out		
	% Aware	% Have attended	Valid sample (n)
Abbotsford	41.5%*	22.6%*	53
Townline Hill	9.6%	5.8%	52
South Clearbrook	40.0%*	14.3%*	35
Old Clayburn	45.5%*	18.2%*	33
Sandy Hill	60.6%*	42.4%*	33

As we have seen previously, most communities show similar levels of awareness of programs such as those offered through Abbotsford Community Services, with the notable exception being Townline Hill, which shows significantly lower levels of awareness for all of their programs. However, actual usage levels here are not necessarily much lower than in South Clearbrook and Old Clayburn, although they are significantly lower than in Abbotsford and Sandy Hill.

Abbotsford Community Services New Beginnings Young Fathers program	Community Break-Out		
	% Aware	% Have attended	Valid sample (n)
Abbotsford	35.8%*	7.5%	53
Townline Hill	3.9%	0.0%	51
South Clearbrook	25.7%*	0.0%	35
Old Clayburn	24.2%*	0.0%	33
Sandy Hill	33.3%*	3.0%	33

Abbotsford Health Unit Well Baby clinics (immunization), Post partum depression information and Counseling, nutrition and breastfeeding consultations, developmental screenings and advice	Community Break-Out		
	% Aware	% Have attended	Valid sample (n)
Abbotsford	90.6%	75.5%	53
Townline Hill	76.9%	69.2%	52
South Clearbrook	88.2%	73.5%	34
Old Clayburn	93.9%	84.8%	33
Sandy Hill	97.0%	87.9%	33

With programs related to children's health, parents display the highest and most consistent levels of awareness across the communities being examined. Awareness ranges from a high of 97% in Sandy Hill to a low of 77% in Townline Hill. Actual usage is also high relative to other programs, with levels ranging from a high of 88% in Sandy Hill to a low of 69% in Townline Hill.

New Beginnings school based program for pregnant or young adults continuing their high school education	Community Break-Out		
	% Aware	% Have attended	Valid sample (n)
Abbotsford	47.2%*	3.8%	53
Townline Hill	5.9%	2.0%	51
South Clearbrook	48.6%*	8.6%	35
Sandy Hill	39.4%*	0.0%	33
Old Clayburn	53.1%*	3.1%	32

Overall, about half of parents surveyed are aware of the New Beginnings program, with the notable exception again being residents of Townline Hill (significantly lower). Actual usage of this program is much lower and fairly consistent across these communities.

Story Time at the library	Community Break-Out		
	% Aware	% Have attended	Valid sample (n)
Abbotsford	79.2%*	41.5%	53
Townline Hill	48.1%	28.8%	52
South Clearbrook	80.0%*	31.4%	35
Old Clayburn	87.9%*	42.4%	33
Sandy Hill	81.8%*	36.4%	33

Around 8 in 10 parents surveyed know about the Story Time program at the library, with the exception of residents in Townline Hill where significantly fewer parents (48%) are aware. Actual usage is fairly consistent across communities, with between 29% and 42% of parents attending this program.

Parks and Recreation Parent and Tot swim, skating, prenatal swim, mom and baby massage programs	Community Break-Out		
	% Aware	% Have attended	Valid sample (n)
Abbotsford	69.8%**	39.6%*	53
Townline Hill	15.7%	7.8%	51
South Clearbrook	73.5%*	29.4%*	34
Old Clayburn	81.8%*	36.4%*	33
Sandy Hill	93.9%*	69.7%*	33

Awareness of Parks and Recreation programs show more variation across the communities than most other programs. Awareness is highest in Sandy Hill (94%) and is significantly lower in Townline Hill (16%) than anywhere else. Actual usage ranges as well, from a high of 70% in Sandy Hill to a low of 8% in Townline Hill.

School Based programs such as Mother Goose, Reading Rascals, and ABC 123 Preschool	Community Break-Out		
	% Aware	% Have attended	Valid sample (n)
Abbotsford	28.3%	5.7%	53
Townline Hill	13.7%*	3.9%	51
South Clearbrook	37.1%	5.7%	35
Sandy Hill	18.2%	0.0%	33
Old Clayburn	15.6%*	3.1%	32

Programs at your place of worship	Community Break-Out		
	% Aware ¹	% Have attended	Valid sample (n)
Townline Hill	36.7%	20.4%	49
Abbotsford	45.0%	45.0%	40
South Clearbrook	33.3%	25.9%	27
Old Clayburn	50.0%	45.8%	24
Sandy Hill	50.0%	45.5%	22

¹Refers only to parents who attend religious services at a place of worship.

• Awareness of school-based programs appears to vary from community to community, with parents in South Clearbrook displaying significantly higher levels of awareness than in Townline Hill or Old Clayburn. However, when it comes to actual usage of the program, there are very few differences across communities.




• Support programs available through parents' place of worship are known to between 33% and 50% of those surveyed. Actual usage is fairly high relative to the levels of awareness, which suggests that most parents who know about these programs do use them, however such programs may not be offered at all places of worship.

2.4 Factors preventing or limiting use of support services

Family Centre Drop-In Programs, Preschool Classes, Meet & Greet Programs

71% aware (n=395)	Now, for each of these programs that you are aware of, can you think of anything that discourages or prevents you from using its services? Or if you do use it already, is there anything that discourages or prevents you from using it even more?	Number of mentions	% of aware respondents (n=278)
33% use or have used (n=395)			
	No / Nothing prevents me / I use it all I want	76	27.3%
	Program's hours do not work for my schedule	59	21.2%
	Other (refer to Appendix A)	41	14.7%
	Lack of time to use it	39	14.0%
	Not a priority / important for our family	29	10.4%
	Lack of information / do not know enough	20	7.2%
	Transportation issues (poor transit / no vehicle)	19	6.8%
	I have children of different ages that cannot participate	16	5.8%
	Cost / Parent fees too high	12	4.3%
	It is located too far away	12	4.3%
	Children participate in other activities	9	3.2%
	My child(ren) is / are too young	8	2.9%
	No space available in program / was full	4	1.4%
	My child gets sick from other children	4	1.4%

Please note that the valid sample size at the community level is too small to provide reliable results (refer to Appendix B).

-  Awareness of the Family Centre Drop-In programs is quite high at nearly three quarters of parents surveyed. Usage is just under half of that.
-  Scheduling conflicts appear to be the single largest obstacle to using these programs, as more than one third of parents indicated that they either lack the time or have conflicts with the program times.
-  Smaller issues include a lack of information on program content and times (7%), transportation issues (7%), and having to deal with children either too old or too young to participate in the program with their sibling(s) (6%).

Abbotsford Community Services Like Best For Babies, Prenatal Classes, Nobody's Perfect

67% aware (n=395)	Now, for each of these programs that you are aware of, can you think of anything that discourages or prevents you from using its services? Or if you do use it already, is there anything that discourages or prevents you from using it even more?	Number of mentions	% of aware respondents (n=259)
31% use or have used (n=394)			
	No / Nothing prevents me / I use it all I want	92	35.5%
	Not a priority / important for our family	43	16.6%
	Other (refer to Appendix A)	28	10.8%
	Program's hours do not work for my schedule	22	8.5%
	Lack of information / do not know enough	21	8.1%
	Transportation issues (poor transit / no vehicle)	18	6.9%
	Do not need these services	18	6.9%
	Lack of time to use it	14	5.4%
	Cost / Parent fees too high	8	3.1%
	Have used similar services outside Abbotsford	5	1.9%
	It is located too far away	3	1.2%
	No space available in program / was full	1	0.4%
	Language barriers	1	0.4%

Please note that the valid sample size at the community level is too small to provide reliable results (refer to Appendix B).

- Abbotsford Community Services programs like Best For Babies are well known at about 67% of all parents surveyed. Usage of the services are just under half that.

- Relatively few obstacles were raised as impediments to parents using these programs. The majority of parents indicated that they use the program or intend to when their child is old enough, or else do not feel that they have a need for these services.

- Again, time and parents' schedules are the biggest obstacle to attending, with 14% citing this as a reason for not attending (at all or more often).

Abbotsford Community Services Like Child Care Resource and Referral Program

37% aware (n=394)	Now, for each of these programs that you are aware of, can you think of anything that discourages or prevents you from using its services? Or if you do use it already, is there anything that discourages or prevents you from using it even more?	Number of mentions	% of aware respondents (n=144)
18% use or have used (n=394)			
	No / Nothing prevents me / I use it all I want	63	43.8%
	Not a priority / important for our family	23	16.0%
	Other (refer to Appendix A)	21	14.6%
	Do not need these services	18	12.5%
	Program's hours do not work for my schedule	12	8.3%
	Cost / Parent fees too high	5	3.5%
	Lack of information / do not know enough	4	2.8%
	Lack of time to use it	2	1.4%
	Transportation issues (poor transit / no vehicle)	2	1.4%
	My child(ren) is / are too young	1	0.7%

Please note that the valid sample size at the community level is too small to provide reliable results (refer to Appendix B).

- A lack of awareness is likely the single largest obstacle to greater use of Abbotsford Community Services programs like the Child Care Resource and Referral Program, with just 37% of parents aware of it. Half of those who are aware appear to use these programs.

- Again, most parents who are aware of the program either use it all they want or else simply choose not to do so (ie. they do not value it).

- Outside of conflicts with parents' schedules, no obstacle impedes more than a handful of parents from using these programs and services.

Abbotsford Community Services New Beginnings Young Fathers Program

25% aware (n=392)	Now, for each of these programs that you are aware of, can you think of anything that discourages or prevents you from using its services? Or if you do use it already, is there anything that discourages or prevents you from using it even more?	Number of mentions	% of aware respondents (n=95)
2% use or have used (n=391)			
	Program is not applicable to me / us	33	34.7%
	No / Nothing prevents me / I use it all I want	20	21.1%
	Not a priority / important for our family	15	15.8%
	Other (refer to Appendix A)	10	10.5%
	Do not need these services	6	6.3%
	Program's hours do not work for my schedule	4	4.2%
	Lack of information / do not know enough	4	4.2%
	Cost / Parent fees too high	2	2.1%
	Lack of time to use it	1	1.1%
	It is located too far away	1	1.1%
	Transportation issues (poor transit / no vehicle)	1	1.1%

Please note that the valid sample size at the community level is too small to provide reliable results (refer to Appendix B).


- The Abbotsford Community Services New Beginnings Young Fathers program also suffers from a low level of exposure in the community. Just 1 in 4 parents have heard of the program and even fewer (2%) have used it.


- Again, priorities, personal choice and circumstances (ie. not a young or a new father) largely account for the low usage levels of this program.


Abbotsford Health Unit

Well Baby Clinics, Post-Partum Depression Information & Counselling, Nutrition & Breastfeeding Consultations, Developmental Screening & Advice

88% aware (n=393)	Now, for each of these programs that you are aware of, can you think of anything that discourages or prevents you from using its services? Or if you do use it already, is there anything that discourages or prevents you from using it even more?	Number of mentions	% of aware respondents (n=339)
78% use or have used (n=393)			
	No / Nothing prevents me / I use it all I want	251	74.0%
	Other (refer to Appendix A)	24	7.1%
	Program's hours do not work for my schedule	15	4.4%
	Transportation issues (poor transit / no vehicle)	14	4.1%
	Lack of information / do not know enough	6	1.8%
	Not a priority / important for our family	6	1.8%
	Cost / Parent fees too high	5	1.5%
	Lack of time to use it	3	0.9%
	It is located too far away	3	0.9%
	Do not need these services	3	0.9%
	Language barriers	1	0.3%
	My child gets sick from other children	1	0.3%
	Have used similar services outside Abbotsford	1	0.3%

-  Awareness of the Health Unit services is the highest of any of the programs tested. Usage is nearly as high, with 78% of all parents surveyed or 90% of those who are aware of the services reporting use.

-  Given the health-related nature of these services, it is not surprising to see that most parents report using the service as much as they need / want.

-  Some comments were made about the service levels at the clinics, including long line ups and impersonal service. Other issues include fitting into parents' schedules and transportation challenges.

Abbotsford Health Unit Well Baby Clinics, Post-Partum Depression Information & Counselling, Nutrition & Breastfeeding Consultations, Developmental Screening & Advice	Community Break-Out				
	Abbotsford (n=48)	Townline Hill (n=39)	Sandy Hill (n=31)	Old Clayburn (n=30)	South Clearbrook (n=30)
No / Nothing prevents me / I use it all I want	77.1%	79.5%	58.1%	73.3%	76.7%
Other (refer to Appendix A)	8.3%	2.6%	12.9%	20.0%	6.7%
Program's hours do not work for my schedule	6.3%	2.6%	6.5%	6.7%	10.0%
Transportation issues (poor transit / no vehicle)	2.1%	2.6%	9.7%	3.3%	3.3%
Lack of information / do not know enough	2.1%	0.0%	3.2%	0.0%	0.0%
Not a priority / important for our family	0.0%	2.6%	3.2%	0.0%	0.0%
Cost / Parent fees too high	6.3%	0.0%	3.2%	0.0%	0.0%
Lack of time to use it	4.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	3.3%
It is located too far away	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	3.3%
Do not need these services	2.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
My child gets sick from other children	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	3.3%	0.0%

- The small sample sizes for each community area preclude detecting all but the largest differences between groups. As such, any differences observed are anecdotal and not statistically significant.
- While not statistically significant, parents in the Sandy Hill area appear to be slightly *more* likely to face challenges or obstacles to using the Health Unit services. No single reason appears to account for this difference however, as a variety of factors appear to contribute to their difficulties.

New Beginnings School Based Program For Pregnant or Young Adults Continuing Their High School Education

37% aware (n=390)	Now, for each of these programs that you are aware of, can you think of anything that discourages or prevents you from using its services? Or if you do use it already, is there anything that discourages or prevents you from using it even more?	Number of mentions	% of aware respondents (n=142)
4% use or have used (n=389)			
	Do not need these services	75	52.8%
	No / Nothing prevents me / I use it all I want	38	26.8%
	Not a priority / important for our family	11	7.7%
	Program's hours do not work for my schedule	7	4.9%
	Other (refer to Appendix A)	6	4.2%
	Lack of information / do not know enough	4	2.8%
	Transportation issues (poor transit / no vehicle)	4	2.8%
	Cost / Parent fees too high	2	1.4%
	Lack of time to use it	1	0.7%
	It is located too far away	1	0.7%

Please note that the valid sample size at the community level is too small to provide reliable results (refer to Appendix B).

- Overall awareness of the New Beginnings program is moderate to low, with just 37% of parents surveyed being aware of it. Usage is even lower at just 4%.

- It is noteworthy that these services are not universally needed by all parents. 87% of parents report that they either do not require the services of the program or else use it as much as they require.

- Actual obstacles to using the program include fitting into parents' schedules, a lack of information about the program, and transportation issues.

Story Time At the Library

72% aware (n=394)	Now, for each of these programs that you are aware of, can you think of anything that discourages or prevents you from using its services? Or if you do use it already, is there anything that discourages or prevents you from using it even more?	Number of mentions	% of aware respondents (n=278)
34% use or have used (n=394)			
	No / Nothing prevents me / I use it all I want	97	34.9%
	Program's hours do not work for my schedule	48	17.3%
	Other (refer to Appendix A)	44	15.8%
	Transportation issues (poor transit / no vehicle)	22	7.9%
	My child(ren) is / are too young	22	7.9%
	Lack of time to use it	21	7.6%
	Lack of information / do not know enough	20	7.2%
	Not a priority / important for our family	11	4.0%
	It is located too far away	9	3.2%
	Cost / Parent fees too high	4	1.4%
	No space available in program / was full	2	0.7%
	Language barriers	1	0.4%

Please note that the valid sample size at the community level is too small to provide reliable results (refer to Appendix B).

- The Abbotsford Story Time program is another well known program at 72% of parents surveyed. Usage is less than half of the awareness, at 34%.
- Owing perhaps to the Story Time program being a lower priority for parents, a greater number than usual identify scheduling conflicts as an impediment to attending.
- Another issue mentioned (see Appendix A) is that the programs are structured to appeal to a limited age of children. This makes it difficult for parents with children of different ages to attend.

Parks & Recreation Parent & Tot Swim, Skating, Prenatal Swim, and Mom & Baby Massage Programs

63% aware (n=391)	Now, for each of these programs that you are aware of, can you think of anything that discourages or prevents you from using its services? Or if you do use it already, is there anything that discourages or prevents you from using it even more?	Number of mentions	% of aware respondents (n=244)
36% use or have used (n=389)			
	No / Nothing prevents me / I use it all I want	103	42.2%
	Cost / Parent fees too high	43	17.6%
	Other (refer to Appendix A)	35	14.3%
	Program's hours do not work for my schedule	34	13.9%
	Lack of information / do not know enough	14	5.7%
	My child(ren) is / are too young	12	4.9%
	Lack of time to use it	12	4.9%
	Not a priority / important for our family	12	4.9%
	Transportation issues (poor transit / no vehicle)	10	4.1%
	It is located too far away	2	0.8%
	No space available in program / was full	1	0.4%

- Parks and Recreation programs are fairly well known and used, with 63% of surveyed parents aware of these programs and 36% actually using them.

- More than any other program, cost is identified here as a common obstacle to greater participation or use of these programs.



- Other issues include scheduling conflicts and a lack of information about programs and their times.

Please note that the valid sample size at the community level is too small to provide reliable results (refer to Appendix B).

School Based Programs Such As Mother Goose, Reading Rascals, and ABC 123 Preschool

22% aware (n=390)	Now, for each of these programs that you are aware of, can you think of anything that discourages or prevents you from using its services? Or if you do use it already, is there anything that discourages or prevents you from using it even more?	Number of mentions	% of aware respondents (n=83)
5% use or have used (n=387)			
No / Nothing prevents me / I use it all I want		24	28.9%
Not a priority / important for our family		14	16.9%
Lack of information / do not know enough		13	15.7%
My child(ren) is / are too young		11	13.3%
Other (refer to Appendix A)		7	8.4%
Program's hours do not work for my schedule		4	4.8%
Transportation issues (poor transit / no vehicle)		2	2.4%
Children participate in other activities		2	2.4%
Cost / Parent fees too high		1	1.2%
Lack of time to use it		1	1.2%

Please note that the valid sample size at the community level is too small to provide reliable results (refer to Appendix B).

-  Awareness of different school-based programs is relatively low, perhaps owing to a lack of visibility and promotion. A lack of information was identified as the most common obstacle to using this service, even amongst those who are aware of the programs.
-  Outside of awareness, there appear to be few barriers to using the programs. Over half of aware parents either use the program all they want, intend to when their child(ren) is old enough, or else do not value these programs enough to attend.

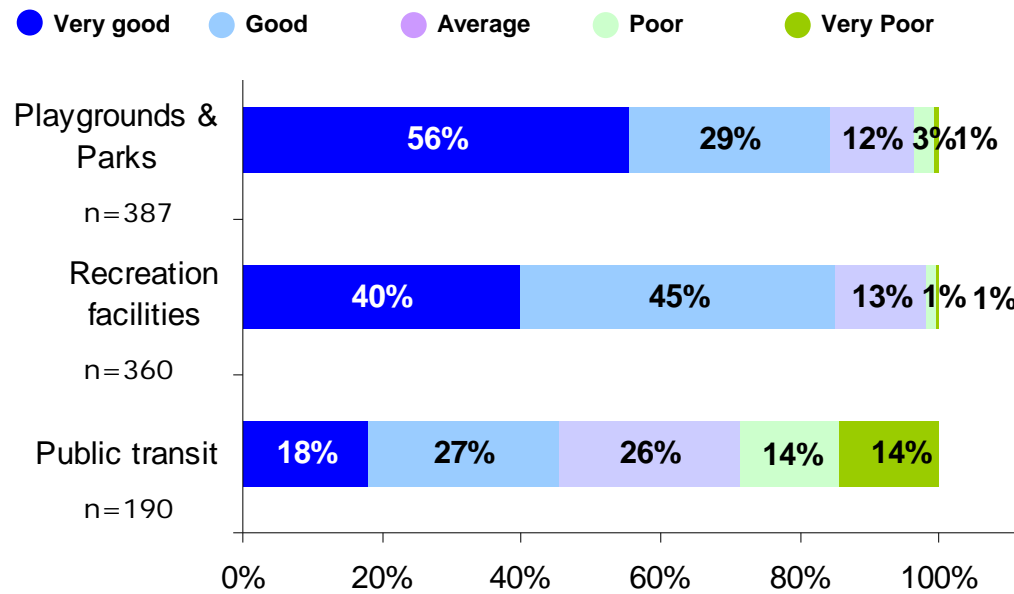
Programs At Place of Worship

21% not applicable (n=395)	Now, for each of these programs that you are aware of, can you think of anything that discourages or prevents you from using its services? Or if you do use it already, is there anything that discourages or prevents you from using it even more?	Number of mentions	% of aware respondents (n=124)
41% aware (n=314)			
33% use or have used (n=314)			
No / Nothing prevents me / I use it all I want		64	51.6%
Other (refer to Appendix A)		17	13.7%
Program's hours do not work for my schedule		8	6.5%
Not a priority / important for our family		6	4.8%
Lack of time to use it		5	4.0%
My child(ren) is / are too young		5	4.0%
Transportation issues (poor transit / no vehicle)		3	2.4%
Cost / Parent fees too high		2	1.6%
Lack of information / do not know enough		2	1.6%
Program is not applicable to me / us		2	1.6%
No space available in program / was full		1	0.8%
Language barriers		1	0.8%

Please note that the valid sample size at the community level is too small to provide reliable results (refer to Appendix B).

- Approximately 1 in 5 parents do not attend religious services or a place of worship, causing awareness and usage of such programs to be lower.
- However, 41% of parents who do attend religious services are aware of programs and services available for parents, while nearly as many (33%) actually use these services.
- Few obstacles to attending these programs can be noted, as over half of aware parents either have no obstacles or claim to use them all that they want. Some individual barriers such as the size and frequency of classes are mentioned (see Appendix A) but this is likely unique to the place of worship being attended.

Q9. We would now like you to tell us how accessible you find each of the following public services in your community. By accessible, we mean that you find it available whenever and however you need it.



Please note that the valid sample size at the community level is too small to provide reliable ratings of the accessibility of public transit due to a large number of respondents answering “don’t know” (refer to Appendix B).

- The majority of parents surveyed give high marks to Abbotsford’s playgrounds and parks in terms of accessibility. 85% rated the accessibility as ‘good’, including 56% who rated it as ‘very good’.
- Marks are nearly as high for the accessibility of recreation facilities throughout Abbotsford. Overall, just as many respondents (85%) rated accessibility to recreation facilities as ‘good’, however with slightly fewer (40%) rating it as ‘very good’.
- Assessments of public transit in Abbotsford are considerably less glowing. Just 45% of respondents rate the service as ‘good’, including just 18% ‘very good’. Nearly as many (14%) rate the service as ‘very poor’ as rate it ‘very good’.

Recreation facilities	Community Break-Out				
	Abbotsford (n=49)	Townline Hill (n=39)	South Clearbrook (n=33)	Sandy Hill (n=33)	Old Clayburn (n=32)
Very good	28.6%	38.5%	42.4%	45.5%	50.0%
Good	57.1%	56.4%	36.4%	39.4%	40.6%
Average	10.2%	5.1%	18.2%	15.2%	9.4%
Poor	2.0%	0.0%	3.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Very poor	2.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

Overall, the ratings of Abbotsford's recreation facilities appear to vary little across these five communities. Parents in Old Clayburn appear more likely to rate the facilities as 'very good' than parents in Abbotsford, although this is not a significant difference.

Ratings of access to playgrounds and parks are also quite similar across these communities, with most of the variation being between 'very good' and 'good'. Parents in Sandy Hill appear to have slightly lower opinions (but not significantly so), with one in three giving a rating of 'average' or lower.

Playgrounds & Parks	Community Break-Out				
	Abbotsford (n=53)	Townline Hill (n=50)	South Clearbrook (n=34)	Sandy Hill (n=33)	Old Clayburn (n=32)
Very good	54.7%	68.0%	58.8%	51.5%	56.3%
Good	32.1%	18.0%	29.4%	15.2%	25.0%
Average	11.3%	14.0%	11.8%	27.3%	6.3%
Poor	1.9%	0.0%	0.0%	3.0%	12.5%
Very poor	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	3.0%	0.0%

Q18-19. I will read out a pair of challenges that face many families throughout your community. Using a 5-point scale where 5 is *A Large Concern* and 1 is *Not At All A Concern*, please tell me how much of a concern each is to you and your family.

Being able to pay the cost of recreational and sports activities	Community Break-Out					Overall (n=370)
	Abbotsford (n=52)	Townline Hill (n=36)	South Clearbrook (n=35)	Old Clayburn (n=33)	Sandy Hill (n=33)	
Hi (4 or 5)	38.5%	52.8%	31.4%	27.3%*	27.3%*	41.1%
Med (3)	28.8%	22.2%	40.0%	30.3%	18.2%	25.7%
Lo (1 or 2)	32.7%	25.0%	28.6%	42.4%	54.5%	33.2%

Overall, 4 in 10 parents feel that being able to pay the cost of recreational and sports activities is a concern. This appears to vary somewhat across communities, with parents in Townline Hill expressing significantly more concern (53%) than parents in Old Clayburn or Sandy Hill (27%).

Being able to find affordable care for children	Community Break-Out					Overall (n=332)
	Abbotsford (n=50)	Sandy Hill (n=32)	Old Clayburn (n=31)	South Clearbrook (n=31)	Townline Hill (n=20)	
Hi (4 or 5)	56.0%	43.8%	48.4%	61.3%	60.0%	54.5%
Med (3)	16.0%	21.9%	9.7%	19.4%	5.0%	12.0%
Lo (1 or 2)	28.0%	34.4%	41.9%	19.4%	35.0%	33.4%

Finding affordable child care is an issue to an even great number of parents, with over half (55%) expressing concern. However, this appears to be spread more evenly across the five communities being examined, with no significant differences emerging between them.

2.5 Availability of information resources

Q10. When you need information on programs, resources, or any other public service for children up to the age of six and their caregivers, where do you look for this information?

	Number of mentions	% of aware respondents (n=395)
Community Services	101	25.6%
Parks & Recreation / Parks & Recreation guide	83	21.0%
Other (refer to Appendix A)	79	20.0%
Word-of-mouth	76	19.2%
Telephone book	75	19.0%
Health Unit	60	15.2%
Internet (refer to Appendix A for specific sites)	58	14.7%
Newspaper	56	14.2%
Libraries	35	8.9%
I do not know / I have never looked	29	7.3%
Schools	29	7.3%
Abbotsford Recreation Centre	19	4.8%
Doctor's office	10	2.5%
At my place of worship	8	2.0%

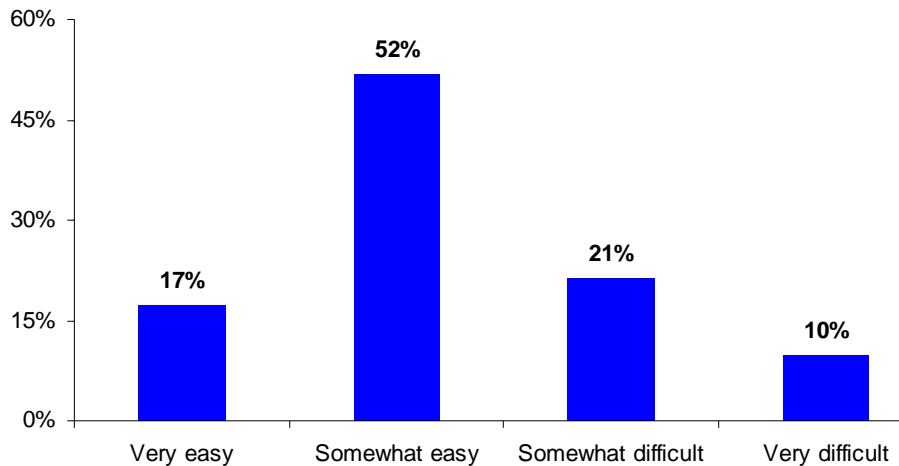
When it comes to looking for information on parent and family services, most parents are able to identify at least one or more sources.

The most turned to source is to Abbotsford Community Services, with over one quarter of all mentions.

The Abbotsford Parks and Recreation Department and their recreation guide (21%) appear to be the second most popular resource.

Other popular sources include the phone book, internet, Abbotsford Health Unit, and speaking to friends, neighbours, and family.

Q11. In your experience, how easy is it to find and obtain quality information regarding resources and programs for children up to the age of six and their caregivers in Abbotsford? (n=377)

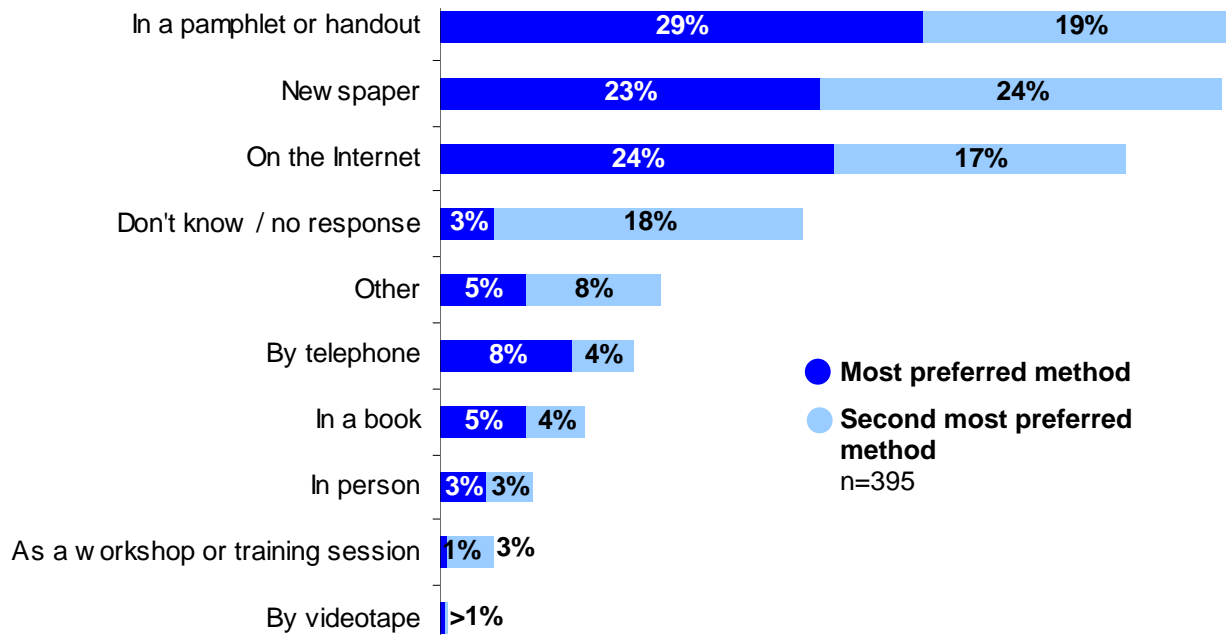


The majority of parents surveyed rate the availability of quality information about resources and programs for children as 'somewhat easy' (52%). Significantly smaller groups rate it as 'very easy' (17%), 'somewhat difficult' (21%), or 'very difficult' (10%).

Even at these small sample sizes, we see some significant differences across the five communities analysed in this survey. Parents in Townline Hill are significantly more likely to find information 'very difficult' to obtain (24%) than anywhere else. Conversely, parents in Abbotsford appear to be more likely (but not significantly) to find it 'very easy' to find information than parents in South Clearbrook and Old Clayburn.

Obtaining information regarding resources and programs for children under six	Community Break-Out				
	Abbotsford (n=52)	Townline Hill (n=51)	South Clearbrook (n=33)	Sandy Hill (n=32)	Old Clayburn (n=31)
Very easy	25.0%	15.7%	9.1%	21.9%	9.7%
Somewhat easy	55.8%	39.2%	60.6%	50.0%	61.3%
Somewhat difficult	15.4%	21.6%	27.3%	18.8%	22.6%
Very difficult	3.8%*	23.5%	3.0%*	9.4%*	6.5%*

Q12. In a perfect world, how would you most like this information to be available? Which of these methods would be your next preferred method?

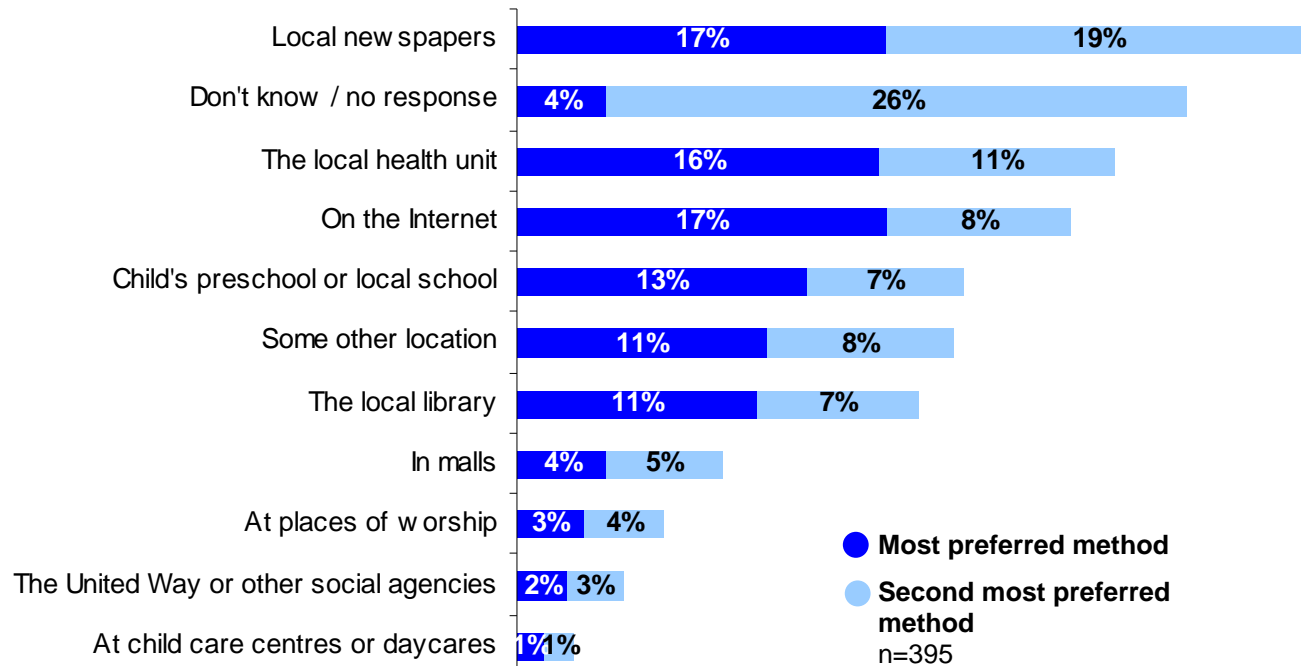


- When asked how they would most prefer to receive information about resources and programs for young children, most parents identified either pamphlets and handouts (48%), notices in the local newspaper (47%), and postings on the Internet (41%) as the ideal channels.

First and second preferred methods (combined)	Community Break-Out				
	Abbotsford (n=53)	Townline Hill (n=52)	South Clearbrook (n=35)	Old Clayburn (n=33)	Sandy Hill (n=33)
In a pamphlet or handout	54.7%*	28.8%	45.7%	45.5%	57.6%*
Newspaper	45.3%	28.8%	54.3%	42.4%	45.5%
On the Internet	52.8%	13.5%*	42.9%*	72.7%	42.4%*
Don't know / no response	9.4%	55.8%	20.0%	6.1%	6.1%
Other (refer to Appendix A)	15.1%	13.5%	11.4%	12.1%	18.2%
By telephone	3.8%*	23.1%	8.6%	9.1%	9.1%
In a book	11.3%	7.7%	8.6%	6.1%	18.2%
In person	5.7%	19.2%	2.9%*	3.0%*	3.0%*
As a workshop or training session	1.9%	9.6%	2.9%	3.0%	0.0%
By videotape	0.0%	0.0%	2.9%	0.0%	0.0%

Preferred methods of receiving information about child and family programs varies somewhat across the five communities examined. Parents in Townline Hill are significantly less likely to favour pamphlets and hand-outs than those in Sandy Hill. On the other hand, parents in the Old Clayburn area are significantly more likely to favour information posted on the Internet than anywhere else except Abbotsford. Similar differences exist for parents in Townline Hill regarding telephone and in-person dissemination of information.

Q14. And at which of the following locations would you most like this information to be available from? Which of these would be your next preferred location?



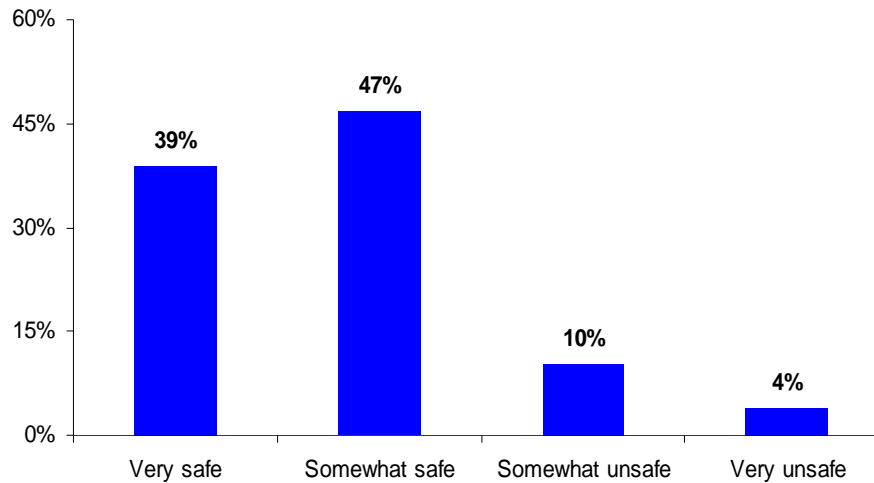
- No single way of receiving information about child and parent support programs strongly stands out from the rest. Placements in the local newspapers are the most popular preference (36%), followed closely by postings at the local health unit (27%), information on the Internet (25%), at preschool or elementary school (20%), and at the local library (19%).

First and second preferred locations (combined)	Community Break-Out				
	Abbotsford (n=53)	Townline Hill (n=52)	South Clearbrook (n=35)	Old Clayburn (n=33)	Sandy Hill (n=33)
Local newspapers	35.8%	23.1%	42.9%	30.3%	42.4%
Don't know / no response	15.1%	59.6%	40.0%	18.2%	18.2%
The local health unit	20.8%	19.2%	22.9%	30.3%	39.4%
On the Internet	20.8%	5.8%*	22.9%	36.4%	24.2%
Child's preschool or local school	18.9%*	40.4%	22.9%	24.2%	18.2%*
Other (refer to Appendix A)	30.2%	13.5%	20.0%	18.2%	21.2%
The local library	20.8%	21.2%	8.6%	21.2%	12.1%
In malls	15.1%	1.9%*	5.7%	18.2%	12.1%
At places of worship	7.5%	15.4%	5.7%	3.0%	6.1%
The United Way or other social agencies	9.4%	0.0%	5.7%	0.0%	0.0%
At child care centres or daycares	5.7%	0.0%	2.9%	0.0%	6.1%

Again we see some strong community differences in receiving this information, despite the small sample sizes. For instance, parents in Old Clayburn are significantly more likely to prefer information via the Internet than parents in Townline Hill. Instead, parents here are more in favour of information at their child's preschool or elementary than those in Sandy Hill or Abbotsford.

2.6 Safety in the community

Q16. How would you describe your neighbourhood? Would you say that it is very safe, somewhat safe, somewhat unsafe, or very unsafe?



Overall, most parents in Abbotsford consider their neighbourhood to be safe. Just 14% would describe their neighbourhood as unsafe, including just 4% who would characterize it as 'very unsafe'.

This level of safety varies considerably across communities however. Parents in Sandy Hill are significantly more likely to feel 'very safe' than parents in any other area, while those in Townline Hill are significantly more likely to feel 'very safe' than parents in Abbotsford. At the same time, parents in Abbotsford are significantly more likely to feel 'somewhat unsafe' in their neighbourhood than parents from any other community.

Perceived safety of neighbourhood	Community Break-Out				
	Abbotsford (n=52)	Townline Hill (n=52)	South Clearbrook (n=35)	Sandy Hill (n=33)	Old Clayburn (n=32)
Very safe	15.4% **	38.5% *	25.7% *	66.7%	25.0% *
Somewhat safe	46.2%	46.2%	65.7%	30.3%	65.6%
Somewhat unsafe	30.8%	11.5% *	8.6% *	3.0% *	3.1% *
Very unsafe	7.7%	3.8%	0.0%	0.0%	6.3%

Q17. Is there anything that you can think of that can be done to improve the safety of your neighbourhood?	Number of mentions	% of aware respondents (n=395)
Cannot think of anything	138	35.2%
Increase police visibility	97	24.7%
Other (refer to Appendix A)	84	21.4%
Lower speed limit	45	11.5%
Install speed bumps	37	9.4%
Form community groups like Block Watch / Neighbourhood Watch / Citizen's Patrol / Block Parents	36	9.2%
Improve street lighting	30	7.7%
Improve maintenance of parks & playground equipment, add benches	18	4.6%
Install sidewalks	17	4.3%
Deal with drug dealers / grow-ops	16	4.1%
Install traffic lights / signs	12	3.1%
Take measures to control speeding	12	3.1%
Provide more information for parents on safety for children	7	1.8%
Widen existing sidewalks	4	1.0%
Deal with the number of drug users	4	1.0%
Improve physical state of buildings / houses	3	0.8%
Deal with prostitution	2	0.5%

Parents in this survey were not shy in suggesting many possible ways in which they felt their neighbourhoods could be made safer, despite many sharing the attitude that they are already safe. An increased police presence (25%) and efforts to reduce speeding (24%) are the two most popular themes suggested by parents. Another common suggestion was a greater effort by communities to be proactive in their security by forming groups such as Block Watch, Neighbourhood Watch, Citizen's Patrol, and Block Parents. Other suggestions were to improve the lighting on the streets, better maintain the parks and playgrounds, install more sidewalks, and address use and sales of drugs in the neighbourhoods.

Suggested changes to improve safety in neighbourhoods	Community Break-Out				
	Abbotsford (n=53)	Townline Hill (n=52)	South Clearbrook (n=35)	Old Clayburn (n=32)	Sandy Hill (n=32)
Cannot think of anything	26.4%*	57.7%	22.9%*	28.1%*	21.9%*
Increase police visibility	30.2%	3.8%*	28.6%	15.6%*	40.6%
Other (refer to Appendix A)	24.5%	15.4%	22.9%	25.0%	15.6%
Lower speed limit	7.5%*	17.3%	22.9%	6.3%*	6.3%*
Install speed bumps	9.4%	3.8%*	2.9%*	15.6%	15.6%
Form community groups like Block Watch / Neighbourhood Watch / Citizen's Patrol / Block Parents	1.9%	3.8%	8.6%	0.0%	12.5%
Improve street lighting	15.1%	1.9%*	5.7%	15.6%	3.1%*
Improve maintenance of parks & playground equipment, add benches	5.7%	3.8%	2.9%	12.5%	6.3%
Install sidewalks	9.4%	0.0%	8.6%	9.4%	0.0%
Deal with drug dealers / grow-ops	3.8%	0.0%	2.9%	6.3%	15.6%
Install traffic lights / signs	1.9%	5.8%	0.0%	0.0%	3.1%
Take measures to control speeding	5.7%	1.9%	2.9%	0.0%	9.4%
Provide more information for parents on safety for children	3.8%	5.8%	2.9%	0.0%	0.0%
Widen existing sidewalks	0.0%	1.9%	2.9%	0.0%	0.0%
Deal with the number of drug users	1.9%	0.0%	0.0%	9.4%	0.0%
Improve physical state of buildings / houses	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Deal with prostitution	1.9%	0.0%	2.9%	0.0%	0.0%

- When one considers that every community has its own unique character and challenges, it is not surprising to observe that many suggestions to improve safety in neighbourhoods vary significantly from community to community. In Sandy Hill, increasing police visibility is the number one priority, significantly more than in any other area. Lowering the speed limit is a top-four issue in South Clearbrook and is a concern of significantly more parents there than anywhere else except for Townline Hill. Installing speed bumps is a greater concern in Sandy Hill and Old Clayburn than in Townline Hill or South Clearbrook while improved street lighting is a stronger priority in Abbotsford and Old Clayburn than either Sandy Hill or Townline Hill.