Coalition Advisory Committee Meeting
September 3, 2009, 10am-2pm
Walla Walla Public Schools – Board Room
364 South Park Street

**Purpose:** To continue development of the Walla Walla Early Learning Coalition Road Map

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Materials</th>
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<tr>
<td>10:00-10:15</td>
<td>Welcome</td>
<td>• Un Historia de un Letrero</td>
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<td>10:15-11:05</td>
<td>Governance Framework</td>
<td>• Walla Walla Valley Early Learning Coalition Charter</td>
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<td><em>Charter Endorsement</em></td>
<td>• Walla Walla Valley Early Learning Coalition Governance Framework</td>
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<td></td>
<td>o Are we willing to encourage our organization to commit time, services, and resources to Coalition priorities?</td>
<td>• Walla Walla Early Valley Learning Coalition Governing Committees</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o Validation and revision/addition of Coalition Partner commitments</td>
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<td>o What are the geographic boundaries of the Coalition?</td>
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<td><em>Governing Bodies</em></td>
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<td>o Are the roles listed appropriate?</td>
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<td>o Do the new names capture authority and role?</td>
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<td><em>Bringing Issues to the Coalition</em></td>
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<td>o What criteria will we use for referring ideas/items to the Staff Team, CAC or CFC?</td>
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<td>o What works best logistically to do this?</td>
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<td><em>Governing Committee Members</em></td>
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<td>o Are key voices/expertise missing?</td>
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<td>o Are some voices over represented?</td>
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<td>o Is there adequate overlap to facilitate communication?</td>
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<td>o Are conflicts of interest managed?</td>
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<td>11:05-11:15</td>
<td>Coalition Member Survey</td>
<td>Coalition Member Survey</td>
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<td>11:15-11:30</td>
<td>Break – Get Lunch</td>
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<td>11:30-12:30</td>
<td>Demonstration of Efforts to Outcomes Software</td>
<td>Theory of Action</td>
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<td>12:30-1:45</td>
<td>Strategies for Implementing Coalition Priorities</td>
<td>Key Informant Interview Findings</td>
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<td>o Reviewing the Parent Survey results and our experience, what are the top three strategies for each priority area?</td>
<td>Child Trends Brief: Why Teens Are Not Involved</td>
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<td>o What might funds pay for?</td>
<td>Walla Walla Valley ELC Parent Survey Results</td>
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<td>o What outcome measure would focus our attention on making necessary changes?</td>
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<td>1:45-2:00</td>
<td>Next Steps/Evaluation</td>
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<td>o 9/16/09 Webinar – Refine the Road Map</td>
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<td>o 9/24/09 Advisory Committee Meeting</td>
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<td>o October Launch Event</td>
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Coalition Charter

I. Purpose
In response to Washington State’s focus on Early Learning and statewide emphasis on providing quality early learning opportunities for all young children, the Walla Walla Valley Early Learning Coalition was formed in November 2006 to improve conditions for our youngest learners and their families.

II. Principles
The Walla Walla Valley Early Learning Coalition is guided by the following core beliefs, values or principles…

- We are focused on how the community can embrace all children and parents to support each child’s social-emotional, cognitive and physical health and development, including children with special needs
- We support parents and other significant adults in their important role as children’s first teachers
- We know that children’s development and learning are influenced by family and social experiences and we plan services and supports that meet their diverse needs
- We design our efforts to promote access to child-centered and child-driven services and programs for all families and adults who work with children
- We adjust our services and supports to create maximum benefit in a cost-effective way
- We believe that working together to address complex issues and avoid unnecessary duplication will benefit children and families in the Walla Walla valley
- We connect the efforts of the Early Learning Coalition to the larger systems of services, communication and supports for healthy communities
- We focus our effort, measure our success and guide adjustment to our approaches through relevant goals, outcomes and targets

III. Vision
All children in the Walla Walla Valley will be healthy and ready for school and life, supported by well-informed parents, involved citizens, and collaborative community partners.

IV. Mission
The mission of the Coalition is to mobilize the community to support parents as their children’s first teachers and improve access to high-quality childcare/preschool that results in quality early learning opportunities for all young children.

V. Coalition Goals
- Increase awareness and knowledge of the importance of early childhood development and what community members can do to promote early success
- Promote support for parents/families in their primary role of raising the next generation
- Promote qualification, competence and appropriate compensation among early learning professionals

VI. Coalition Outcomes
- Possible Lever: % of public who can name Coalition Slogan
- Possible Lever: % of children entering school fully ready
- Possible Lever: % of Families with 90% of Family Strengths
- Possible Lever: % of early learning professionals with X, Y & Z credential

VII. Coalition Strategies (groups of activities that lead to outcomes)
To be determined
VIII. Membership
Membership is open to any organization that is formally interested in endorsing the Charter of the Coalition. The Coalition is not a formal membership organization at this time. Attendance at meetings is open to organizations interested in subscribing to the purpose and goals of the Coalition. The Coalition will seek members who are ready, willing, and able to commit service, time and resources to the Coalition’s purposes.

IX. Organization and Staffing
Walla Walla Community College currently serves as the fiscal sponsor of the Coalition and provides and/or contracts for support services to the Coalition. Walla Walla Community College currently employs and supervises the Coalition Program Manager.

X. Governance and Decision-Making
The Coalition is Governed by the Coalition Advancement Committee with support and input from the Community Advisory Council and Coalition Staff Team as outlined in the most current Coalition Governance Framework. To the degree possible, consensus decision-making will guide the Coalition. When consensus is not possible, but a majority of Coalition are able to reach agreement, the Coalition may focus effort and direct resources to support it. Decisions that divide the Coalition should be avoided.

Coalition Advancement Committee
The Coalition Advancement Committee provides insight and guidance, challenging the Community Advisory Council to “Think Big.” They are decision-makers within their own organization and their input is required to make permanent and meaningful system changes.

Role of the Coalition Advancement Committee
- Discuss public policy issues and implications for Walla Walla families
- Set, revisit and revise Coalition strategic direction, providing insight, guidance and inspiration and approving strategies and initiatives
- Determine use and distribution of pooled funding
- Build relationships with key influencers and champion system

Community Advisory Council
The Community Advisory Council is a results driven, task-oriented group, focused on achieving the goals of the Coalition. The Community Advisory Council will be assigned short term projects, with specific timelines for completion.

Role of the Community Advisory Council
- Design strategies and initiatives that advance coalition goals
- Designate/participate in long- & short-term work groups
- Support and promote coalition initiatives and infrastructure through pooled, aligned and co-funding, and alignment of effort
- Gather data about success of initiatives
- Engage the broader community in coalition activities

Staff Team
The Staff Team is comprised of the Program Manager and four individuals from the following organizations:
- Migrant Head Start,
- Walla Walla Valley Public Schools,
- Walla Walla Community College,
- a private financial consultant.
Role of the Staff Team
- Recruit and orient Leadership Team participants
- Report progress to partners, funders and the public
- Gather data and evaluate success of initiatives
- Research best practices

Officers
- A Chair will ensure that an agenda is prepared for distribution prior to Coalition meetings.
- A Vice-Chair will oversee the work of and ensure the submission of reports from the chairs of all committees.
- The Treasurer will keep an account of monies received and expended for the use of the Coalition and shall make a report at the annual meeting.
- The Secretary will keep records of all proceedings of the Coalition.

Program Manager
- Facilitates Coalition meetings with support from the Executive Team. Day- to-day activities are the responsibility of the Program Manager.
- In partnership with the Executive Committee, initiates and directs the development of policies and implements those policies.
- Represents the Coalition as its Program Manager in all dealings with other organizations, individuals, and the general public.
- Develops short range (one-year) goals for the Coalition and works with the Executive Team to prepare long-range plans for the coalition.
- Reports the progress towards Coalition objectives, new state policies, directives and legislation, and other issues of concern to the coalition.

XI. Charter Amendments
Changes to the Charter can be made and voted upon by the Coalition.

XII. Current Charter Commitments
This section of the Charter memorializes roles, authority and agreements of Charter members. Charter members agree to be bound by agreements made and memorialized in the Charter. Coalition members who determine that they are unable to continue to endorse the Charter and are willing to forgo the benefits of Charter Membership, must send a letter revoking their endorsement to the Coalition Manager, so noting.

Current Commitments:
- We agree to be responsible for stating our own organizational needs and perspective honestly, while keeping the Coalition and broader community needs and priorities in mind
- We agree to bring complex issues of common interest to the Coalition Table (Insert appropriate first-line committee) for discussion and decision.
- We agree to work with other organizations that deliver similar services so that we can make access for families easier
- We agree to bring grant opportunities of broader community interest to the Coalition (Insert appropriate first-line committee) for advice on potential grant partners and connection to Coalition initiatives
Vision: All children in the Walla Walla Valley will be healthy and ready for school and life, supported by well-informed parents, involved citizens, and collaborative community partners.

**Coalition Manager**
- Draft Operating Policies
- Staff team meetings
- Prepare reports

**Coalition Focus Committee**
- Discuss public policy issues and implications for Walla Walla families
- Set, revisit and revise Coalition strategic direction, providing insight, guidance and inspiration.
- Approve strategies and initiatives
- Determine use and distribution of pooled funding
- Build relationships with key influencers and champion system changes

**Community Advisory Committee**
- Design strategies and initiatives that advance coalition goals
- Designate/participate in long- & short-term work groups
- Support and promote coalition initiatives and infrastructure through pooled, aligned and co-funding, and alignment of effort
- Gather data about success of initiatives
- Engage the broader community in coalition activities
- Cultivate outside voices

**Logistics Team**
- Recruit and orient Leadership Team participants
- Report progress to partners, funders and the public
- Gather data for evaluation of initiatives
- Research best practices
- Research and prepare for recommended CAC agenda items

**INFRASTRUCTURE/FISCAL AGENT**
- Account for funds
- Manage contracts & grants
- Employ and supervise Coalition Manager Coordinator
- Provide data analysis

**Strategic Initiatives**
## Coalition Focus Committee

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Affiliation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blethen, Rob</td>
<td>Walla Walla Union-Bulletin</td>
<td>Associate Publisher</td>
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<tr>
<td>Carter, Richard</td>
<td>Walla Walla Public Schools</td>
<td>Superintendent</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clubb, Megan</td>
<td>Baker Boyer Bank</td>
<td>President, CEO</td>
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<tr>
<td>Coffey, Alan</td>
<td>Coffey Communications</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dozier, Perry</td>
<td>County Commissioner</td>
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<tr>
<td>Edwards, Jock</td>
<td>Sherwood Trust</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hardy, Linda</td>
<td>Walla Walla Community College Foundation</td>
<td>Executive Director</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hayner, James</td>
<td>Minnick - Hayner</td>
<td>Attorney, Partner</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jones, Michael</td>
<td>Banner Bank</td>
<td>President, CEO</td>
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<tr>
<td>Knight, Lawson</td>
<td>Blue Mountain Community Foundation</td>
<td>Executive Director</td>
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<tr>
<td>Martin, Joanne</td>
<td>Sherwood Trust</td>
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<tr>
<td>McDevitt, Liz</td>
<td>United Way of Walla Walla</td>
<td>Executive Director</td>
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<td>Moss, Steven</td>
<td>Blue Mountain Action Council</td>
<td>CEO</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nelson, Bart</td>
<td>Nelson Irrigation Corporation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sinclair, Stephen</td>
<td>Washington State Penitentiary</td>
<td>Superintendent</td>
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<td>VanAusdie, Steven</td>
<td>Walla Walla Community College</td>
<td>President</td>
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<td>Walsh, Maureen</td>
<td>State Representative</td>
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<tr>
<td>Burdick, Steve</td>
<td>Providence St. Mary Medical Center</td>
<td>President</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grant-Herriot, Laura</td>
<td>State Representative</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kuntz, Jim</td>
<td>Port of Walla Walla</td>
<td>Executive Director</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bowen, Samantha</td>
<td>Early Learning Coalition</td>
<td>Project Manager</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brennan, Melinda</td>
<td>Walla Walla Community College</td>
<td>Program Coordinator</td>
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<td>Esquivel, Yolanda</td>
<td>Washington State Migrant Council</td>
<td>Executive Director</td>
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<td>McCarthy, Jim</td>
<td>Foundation for Early Learning</td>
<td>Chair</td>
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<td>Peasley, Judy</td>
<td>Walla Walla Public Schools</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
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## Community Advisory Committee

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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Adams, Jean (Punkey)</td>
<td>Walla Walla County Rural Library District</td>
<td>Executive Director</td>
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<td>Barila, Teri</td>
<td>Commitment to Community</td>
<td>Coordinator</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bassee, Suzy</td>
<td>Children's Home Society</td>
<td>Family Advocate</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bassham, Susann</td>
<td>Walla Walla County Public Health</td>
<td>Assessment Coordinator</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bleth, Nora</td>
<td>Walla Walla County Public Health</td>
<td>Nurse</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bouchey, Brooke</td>
<td>Walla Walla Public Schools - Lincoln Alternative High School</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bowen, Samantha</td>
<td>Walla Walla Early Learning Coalition, Born Learning</td>
<td>Program Manager</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brennan, Melinda</td>
<td>Early Childhood and Educational Support Programs, Walla Walla</td>
<td>Coordinator</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brinkley, Betsy</td>
<td>Betsy's Home Child Care and Preschool</td>
<td>Owner, Child Care Provider</td>
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<tr>
<td>Butler, Nancy</td>
<td>My Friend's House Child Care Center, YWCA</td>
<td>Director</td>
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<tr>
<td>Campbell, Mary</td>
<td>Community Council, Community Member</td>
<td>Consultant</td>
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<td>Name</td>
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<tr>
<td>Carter, Nancy</td>
<td>Commitment to Community</td>
<td>Parent Educator</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cook, Dick</td>
<td>Walla Walla Council for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect</td>
<td>President</td>
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<tr>
<td>Crudup, Leah</td>
<td>Title 1, LAP Program WWPS</td>
<td>Coordinator</td>
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<td>Duthie, Roz</td>
<td>Community Member</td>
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<tr>
<td>Esquivel, Yolanda</td>
<td>Washington State Migrant Council Head Start</td>
<td>Director</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gilpatrick, Mary Ann</td>
<td>Walla Walla Public Library Kids’ Corner</td>
<td>Youth Services Librarian</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gray, Jan</td>
<td>St. Mary’s Medical Center, Women’s Services</td>
<td>Director</td>
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<tr>
<td>Groff, Debbie</td>
<td>Washington State Department of Early Learning (DEL)</td>
<td>Child Care Center Licensor</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kelley, Debbie</td>
<td>Department of Court Services Juvenile Justice Center</td>
<td>Probation Office, Diversion Coordinator</td>
</tr>
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<td>Kunz, Peggy</td>
<td>Walla Walla Community College Child Care Resource &amp; Referral</td>
<td>Coordinator</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leschinski, Susan</td>
<td>Washington State Department of Early Learning (DEL)</td>
<td>Home Child Care Licensor</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mbajah, Nelly</td>
<td>Department of Social &amp; Health Services (DSHS)</td>
<td>Child Welfare Worker</td>
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<td>McCarthy, Jim</td>
<td>Community Member</td>
<td>Board Member</td>
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<td>McConnell, Kathy</td>
<td>Kids Place Child Care Center, Whitman College</td>
<td>Director</td>
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<td>McDevitt, Liz</td>
<td>United Way of Walla Walla</td>
<td>Executive Director</td>
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<td>McKiernan, Linda</td>
<td>Pomeroy Public Schools and WWCC Preschool Co-op</td>
<td>Parent Educator</td>
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<tr>
<td>Meyer, Michelle</td>
<td>Walla Walla Community College, Early Childhood and Educational Support Programs</td>
<td>Parent Educator</td>
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<td>Nibler, Caria</td>
<td>Walla Walla County Department of Human Services, Birth to Three Early Intervention</td>
<td>Family Resources Coordinator</td>
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<td>O'Neil, Debbie</td>
<td>Department of Early Learning (DEL)</td>
<td>Licensing Supervisor</td>
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<td>Osterman, Amy</td>
<td>Children’s Home Society Early Head Start</td>
<td>Program Manager</td>
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<tr>
<td>Painter, Donna</td>
<td>Walla Walla Public Schools Head Start &amp; ECEAP</td>
<td>Executive Director</td>
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<td>Pankl, Richard</td>
<td>Children’s Home Society</td>
<td>Executive Director</td>
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<td>Peasley, Judy</td>
<td>Walla Walla Public Schools - Title 1, Special Programs</td>
<td>Director</td>
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<tr>
<td>Robinson, Judi</td>
<td>R-Kidz Child Care Center</td>
<td>Director</td>
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<td>Rodriguez, Heather</td>
<td>Children’s Home Society</td>
<td>Clinical Specialist</td>
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<tr>
<td>Swanson, Beth</td>
<td>The Mom’s Network</td>
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<td>Weakley, Karen</td>
<td>ESD 123</td>
<td>Early Childhood Trainer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whitaker, Laurie</td>
<td>The Ark Child Care Center</td>
<td>Director</td>
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<tr>
<td>Withers, Laurie</td>
<td>Parent Education Program, WWCC</td>
<td>Program Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wolf, Karen</td>
<td>Walla Walla Camp Fire</td>
<td>Executive Director</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yenney, Sue</td>
<td>Dayton School District</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
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**Coalition Logistics Team**

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<tr>
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<td>Program Manager</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brennan, Melinda</td>
<td>Early Childhood and Educational Support Programs, Walla Walla Community College (WWCC)</td>
<td>Program Coordinator</td>
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<td>Esquivel, Yolanda</td>
<td>Washington State Migrant Council Head Start</td>
<td>Director</td>
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<td>McCarthy, Jim</td>
<td>Foundation for Early Learning</td>
<td>Chair</td>
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<tr>
<td>Peasley, Judy</td>
<td>Title 1, Special Programs, Walla Walla Public Schools</td>
<td>Director</td>
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Web Survey

Dear Walla Walla Valley Early Learning Coalition Partner:

The Coalition has recently engaged the services of Dovetailing Consulting to help plan, organize and implement strategies that mobilize the community to support parents as their children's first teachers and improve access to high quality childcare/preschool. We are striving to ensure that through our efforts, all children in the Walla Walla Valley are healthy and ready for school and life, supported by well-informed parents, involved citizens, and collaborative community partners.

To help us to ensure that this long-term effort supports the work that you do and moves us in a useful direction, we are asking that you complete a brief web survey by September 14th or forward it to the appropriate person in your organization who can provide answers.

We thank you for your prompt attention to this.

Demographics
1. What is your name?
2. For what organization do you work?
3. What is your email address?

Setting the Target
1. What would you say are your organizations three top strategic early learning program goals? (free form text)
2. Looking at the Coalition’s current discussion draft of a Theory of Action for our efforts in the valley, how strong would you say the connections are between your organization’s efforts and the prioritized strategies in this Theory of Action? (Unsure, Not at all, Somewhat, strong, very strong)
3. Does your organization have a strategic plan that includes services for young children and their families?
4. Does your organization have a long-range policy agenda? (Yes, No, Unsure, Not Applicable)
5. Did your organization have a legislative policy agenda for 2009? (Yes, No, Unsure, Not Applicable)
6. Current Coalition members have identified three priorities for coalition action. Please indicate the degree to which you think these priorities are aligned with your organization’s goals:
   Promote support for Parents/Families in Their Important Role Raising the Next Generation
   Not sure Not at all Little To some degree To a great degree
   Promote qualification, competence and appropriate compensation among early learning professionals
   Not sure Not at all Little To some degree To a great degree
Increase Awareness & Knowledge of the Importance of Early Childhood Development &
What Community Members Can Do

Not sure  Not at all  Little  To some degree  To a great degree

7. Thinking about criteria the Coalition would use to guide planning and investment
priorities for the coalition, please indicate the degree to which you think these criteria
align with what you and your organization think is strategic for the Coalition:

- **Importance** (alignment with coalition objectives, data and community perception
suggest it and it is not fully addressed by others)

  Not sure  Not at all  Little  To some degree  To a great degree

- **Changeability** (ability to be effectively addressed by the coalition, community
resources, interest and expertise are available, issue is amenable to intervention)

  Not sure  Not at all  Little  To some degree  To a great degree

- **Cultural relevance** (ability to ensure that services are developed and delivered in a
manner that addresses cultural perspective and approach)

  Not sure  Not at all  Little  To some degree  To a great degree

8. Does your organization currently gather data that can help you to gauge what
percentage of need for services is met?  (Yes, No, I don’t know)

9. Does your organization currently gather data about how closely programs are being
implemented in the manner intended?  (Yes, No, I don’t know)

10. Does your organization gather any information about improvement in outcomes for
children and families you serve?  (Yes, No, I don’t know)

11. What types of organizational resources might you consider sharing or pooling in a
coordinated effort that allows you to better meet your customers’ needs:

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<thead>
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<th>Possible area of resource sharing</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Maybe</th>
<th>Yes</th>
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<tr>
<td>Administrative services</td>
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<td>Fund raising/grant writing</td>
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<td>Public relations, marketing, communications</td>
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12. How connected to current Coalition planning efforts do you currently feel?

Not sure  Not at all  Little  To some degree  To a great degree
### Our Goals

- **Members Can**
- **Community & What**
- **Development Early Childhood**
- **Importance of the Knowledge Awareness & Increase**

### Potential Strategies (✓ indicates currently happening)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bilingual/bicultural programs</th>
<th>MOPS</th>
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<tr>
<td>Early Head Start/Head Start/ECEAP</td>
<td>Parent to Parent</td>
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<td>Early Intervention Program</td>
<td>SPARK – CHSW</td>
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<td>Home Team</td>
<td>Tot spot/WWCC Co-op</td>
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<td>Infant/Toddler intervention</td>
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<td>Mom’s Network</td>
<td>Young Lives – Teen Moms</td>
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<td>Crisis Nursery</td>
<td>YWCA</td>
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<td>Engage homeless families</td>
<td>Expand program hours, eligibility, sliding scale for Head Start</td>
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<td>Families of incarcerated parents – provided education and support to both parents (incarcerated and at-home single parent)</td>
<td>Increase access to Home Team services and funding and accountability</td>
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<td>Increase access to Home Team services and funding and accountability</td>
<td>Medically accurate sex education as pre-parenting skill</td>
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<td>More access to bilingual/bicultural program</td>
<td>Nanny 81</td>
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<td>Parent anonymous</td>
<td>Parent support line – family helpline</td>
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<td>Parent support line – family helpline</td>
<td>Parent-support “Tupperware Party”</td>
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<td>Parent-support “Tupperware Party”</td>
<td>Prenatal-nurse family partnership</td>
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<td>Prenatal-nurse family partnership</td>
<td>Pre-parenting skills</td>
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<td>Provide comprehensive access at mid and high school levels</td>
<td>Articles from parents</td>
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<td>Articles from parents</td>
<td>Teen parent services and education/training provided to all teen parents (when possible through a trusted mentor)</td>
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### System Outcomes

- We have defined school readiness
- A framework for thinking about strong family development is adopted
- We have figured out where families are and how to reach them
- There is a centralized resource guide for parents

### First Draft Theory of Action

#### Community Outcomes

- Parents/Families are successful
  - Parent ability, effectiveness and confidence are acknowledged and bolstered
  - Understanding of what is needed to parent is deepened
  - Families engage in helpful services
  - Pre-parenting/coping skills & effective decision-making are enhanced
  **Possible Lever:** % of Families with 90% of Family Strengths

- Children experience positive development
  - Child Aggressive behaviors are reduced
  - Home experiences are nurturing
  - Children experiencing disabilities are supported
  **Possible Lever:** % of children entering school fully ready

- Preparedness of early learning professionals increases
  - Degree attainment of increases
  - Expertise about children with special needs increases
  - Sophistication of the differences among sub-groups of parents is increased
  **Possible Lever:** % of early learning professionals with X, Y & Z credential

- Community understanding increases:
  - Pivotal impact of early experiences
  - Early brain development
  - How adult behavior affects child development
  - EL professionals are valued & revered
  **Possible Lever:** % of public who can name Coalition Slogan

### Name?

- **Promote support for Parents/Families in Their Important Role Raising the Next Generation**

- **Name? Promote qualification, competence and appropriate compensation among early learning professionals**

### Name?

- **Increase Awareness & Knowledge of the Importance of Early Childhood Development & What Community Members Can Do**

- **Born Learning Community events (recreate or re-implement)**
- **Commitment to Community (engage people in neighborhoods)**
- **United Way campaign**
  - 1st annual learning event
  - Bring Information and resources to younger audience
  - Build on Community Events and get more of them started
  - Create an ACE’s community network
  - Creating a blog, website; list serve, Facebook group
  - Early learning fairs
  - Educate medical providers
  - Increase communication and collaboration within us
  - Prenatal education (increase and building on)
  - Prevention and education
  - Raising our own awareness and assumptions
  - Utilize media outlets to share key info (i.e., kinder readiness)
Key Informant Interview Key Findings
August 2009

Prepared for:
Walla Walla Valley Early Learning Coalition
Walla Walla, Washington

Prepared by:
Kristin Wiggins Consulting LLC
Seattle, Washington
Key Informant Interview Key Findings

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Introduction

Members of the Walla Walla Valley Early Learning Coalition (ELC) identified 14 possible key informants to be interviewed. Key informants were selected due to their diverse perspectives in the community that will offer insights into the needs and ideas that the broader community has relating to children’s learning and development and the needs of their parents. ELC partners believed the identified key informants’ perspective will help them in considering the diverse interests around family success.

Of those 14 key informants, 8 were available for interviews during the month of August 2009. There were 6 key informants who were unable to be interviewed for various reasons (two were out of town, one declined, one cancelled the interview at the last moment and was unable to be rescheduled, one was non-responsive to outreach, and one indicated they would be willing to be interviewed but did not respond to multiple scheduling attempts).

The key informants who were interviewed represented a variety of interests including faith, public health, public schools, law enforcement, and direct services as well as the perspectives of parents and the Latino community. The key informants interviewed had varying degrees of knowledge about early childhood development and varying levels of understanding of and involvement in the ELC’s efforts. The key informants were asked the same 7 questions during interviews that lasted 20-70 minutes in length.

The purposes of the interviews which were not shared with the key informant were:

- Access information, ideas and perceptions not already represented in the Coalition
- Identify the needs and concerns of thought leaders, so that the options, strategies and language included in the Road Map for Success can tap into their existing interests and energy
- Engage, cultivate and understand key thought leaders and relationship brokers who can advance or oppose your plans, so that you know what they think
- Identify possible early champions

Considering these purposes and the responses key informants offered for the 7 interview questions, common themes prevailed over the course of conducting the key informant interviews. These themes are explored in the Key Findings section in this report. The final pages of this report are notes from individual interviews. Note that the introductory section of the interview questionnaire is included only in the first individual interview notes for Teri Barila.

Key informants were told that the information they shared during their interview would be used for internal purposes only to inform development of the Road Map for Success which will focus efforts that support families for the years ahead and will help inform the ELC’s efforts (By-laws, Sept. 2008 and Theory of Action, July 2009) to:

- Support parents as their children’s first teachers
- Promote and support parents/families in their important role of raising the next generation
- Improve access to high quality childcare/preschool
- Increase awareness and knowledge of the importance of early childhood development and what community members can do
- Develop a community mobilization that will result in quality early learning opportunities for all young children
Thus, it is important to honor this informal agreement with the key informants by keeping their specific comments confidential to members of the ELC and any other persons involved in the Road Map for Success planning and development effort.

Additionally, the notes from the individual key informant interviews reflect the interviewer’s summary of conversational comments. Although the interviewer frequently asked clarifying questions like, “Am I hearing correctly that you are saying...?” the key informants did not review, edit, or approve their written interview summary notes. Thus, the conversational nature of key informant interviews and lack of approval of written interview summaries are additional reasons why individual comments and this report in its entirety should be kept confidential.
Key Findings In Brief

1. There is a strong preference for an effort that focuses on the core. There is low tolerance for another initiative that lingers at the fringes.

Key informants understand the stakes are dire if the pressing issues facing children and families are not addressed. Thus, at least half of the key informants would like to see the ELC focus on at least one core issue versus create a list create a longer list of less impactful items to address. A couple called for the ELC to be “visionary.” At the same time, key informants also recognize being visionary takes much commitment and many do not have much time or financial resources to dedicate to the effort.

2. There is a request for a resource list that can be widely shared, understood, and used.

A few key informants said there is a need for a comprehensive listing of services that parents and families could access. They said a tool like this would have two positive results: (1) in the short-term more would be utilized by people who need them; and (2) in the long-term service organizations could better align their services and reduce duplication. This request highlights a larger point made by several key informants. There is a desire to have opportunities to collaborate among all stakeholders who work with families with young children.

3. Poverty must be acknowledged and addressed. It is a cycle that perpetuates and intensifies.

Almost all key informants said poverty and families’ struggles to make ends meet as having major impacts on children’s wellbeing and general health. They also see how poverty correlates with other social problems and adverse elements in the home. Yet some said there is a sense of denial and/or ignorance in the community about the severity of poverty.

4. Teenage pregnancy and gang presence are both pressing problems.

Teenage pregnancy and gang presence are seen as the next tier of urgent problems to deal with after poverty and critical issues key informants see as related to poverty. Key informants see these as some of the source of student/child suffering and poor performance, and as serious issues that will grow if left unattended.

5. Family is the foundation. Education is the way.

The majority of key informants expressed that family is the foundation of community and society as a whole. As the health of families is in jeopardy, so is the state of the community and of the global economy. Key informants also believe a restoration in the value of education and an acceptance that it is the parents’ responsibility to help guide their child’s academic success is important.

6. Parent education is a key need. Yet, a paradigm shift is required.

Key informants think parenting education and training is very important yet they say parents will not access it unless it is thought of as a good thing by both parents and trainers.
Key Findings In-depth

1. There is a strong preference for an effort that focuses on the core. There is low tolerance for another initiative that lingers at the fringes.

All key informants expressed clear recognition that the pressing problems are big and have very significant impacts on children and threaten the health of the community. In response to question 4, “What is at stake if we do not address the pressing issues facing children and families today?” all key informants expressed the consequences are dire. In summary, key informants believe that not addressing the pressing issues today will lead to a lower-quality workforce which will have major impacts on both the micro and macro levels. On the micro level, the individual without the ability to communicate appropriately, solve problems, and have stable, sustainable employment will not be able to provide a healthy home environment for their children. As a result, children will suffer. On the macro level, the community and nation will suffer when there is more of a drain on public resources for human services. And, if there are not enough skilled, competent, stable workers to protect and contribute to the businesses and markets our nation does well in, pay taxes, and contribute to a vital safety net and social services, then innovation, freedom, and quality of life as we know it in the United States will end. One key informant said a “social meltdown” on the national level would take place.

Due to the belief and understanding that the stakes are dire, many key informants (at least 4 of 8) said they would like the ELC to focus on at least one core issue rather than create a longer list of less impactful items to address. A couple key informants said there needs to be a “visionary” effort to address at least one pressing issue and at least two key informants indicated there are already many well-intentioned efforts in the region that do not produce results.

Applying This Finding

While there is a desire to see a serious, brave effort that calls out at least one core issue to tackle, key informants also recognize this can feel overwhelming for the general public and it requires much hard work and committed agents of change. The majority of key informants indicated they do not have much capacity to dedicate to this effort given the realities of their work load. Many also stated that their organizations cannot make financial contributions to the effort.

Because of this need for bold action, yet limited “volunteering time”, Coalition members might consider how different levels of engagement and different levels of leaders can be used to achieve the end goals. Who are visible, prominent, and credible champions that can make a good public case for change? Who are the leaders who have the time and long-term commitment to do the planning and implement the work? Consider what tiered-options for involvement in the ELC efforts can be presented to capture all levels of support. There is a preference for a neutral convener such as the ELC to staff this work.

Additionally, consider what larger umbrella would make a compelling case to capture both the audience who craves something visionary and the audience that likes to dig into the actual work and see immediate results for families. For instance, consider how the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) study by the Center for Disease Control could offer a high-level message that attends to both audiences. Also, the ACE study could also help acknowledge and address issues of poverty, teen pregnancy, and gang activity outlined in key findings 3 and 4 below. The ACE study was mentioned specifically by one key informant. Additionally, the
return on investment work from the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis (Art Rolnik and Rob Grunewald) was also mentioned as compelling by one key informant.

Consider how optimism can also be used to balance this sense that the stakes are dire. In the last two years focus group testing among business leaders in parts of western Washington and nationally has shown that the message of “children who start kindergarten behind never catch up” was negative because it contradicted people’s belief that hard work and a sense of hope can prevail. Perhaps some of the elements of the ACE study with localized Walla Walla data could be paired with a message of community pride. Jim Hunt, the former governor of North Carolina, who was an incredible champion for children and the main creator of Smart Start which is a comprehensive early childhood system model mimicked across the nation, was exceptionally skilled at tapping into community pride as a widespread motivator to bond people across his state. He was constantly speaking about the state of children in North Carolina and why it was everyone’s responsibility to care for them. Community pride was used as the positive hook that bonded people.

Another key finding from the aforementioned national focus group testing among business leaders is that the neuroscience arguments are more effective given today’s economic times than the return on investment arguments.

2. There is a request for a resource list that can be widely shared, understood, and used.

At least three key informants indicated there is a need for a comprehensive listing of services that parents and families could access. The users would be actual clients (i.e. parents with needs ranging from basic parenting education materials to help with substance abuse), service providers who want to make referrals to expand and align their services with other agencies, and people who have contact with parents and families who may be struggling and want to share a resource (i.e. law enforcement or employers).

More stakeholders made comments indicating increased awareness of existing services would result in two positive results: (1) in the short-term more parents, families, and service providers would have increased awareness about the existing services and more services would be utilized by people who need them; and (2) in the long-term service organizations could better align their services and reduce duplication.

The list should inventory all services in the community that help families. One key informant mentioned the local paper plans to do a quarterly pull-out publication that would itemize such services on the back pages.

Most, if not all of the key informants indicated they would be willing to use their networks and existing member-communication methods to share and distribute a tool like this.

This request highlights a larger point made by several key informants. There is a desire to have opportunities to collaborate among all stakeholders who work with families with young children. At least two key informants mentioned the regular meeting that takes place for people who work on children’s mental health issues. They both mentioned this as a successful example of a group effort to share information and identify gaps and responses to those gaps. It should be noted that at least two key informants mentioned they did not like meetings because they tend to waste time. This highlights the need for meetings to pivot around identified meaningful action in order to spur participation, while acknowledging that some people simply do not like to attend a lot of meetings given the other pulls on their time.
Applying This Finding

Consider how a resource list of this broad nature could be organized to be easily used by the variety of users who have different interests. For instance, should categories like “urgent services,” “free services,” and “low-cost family activities” be designated to help all users or should different versions of this resource list be created for different audiences and different distribution channels? Also, consider key finding 6 when determining how to name any categories related to parent resources, support, training, or education. And, could the existing effort of the local newspaper be adapted to save resources?

Consider how this request for an immediate resource speaks to larger needs for easy-to-use free tools. One key informant asked for easy-to-use materials for parents about encouraging development among young children. (Note: Interviewer sent the key informant links for Born Learning materials.) Are there other tools that would help meet a need and serve as a deposit for the ELC to make in their outreach relationships? For instance, can a resource list be a positive relationship-starting tool that would help potential ELC members and champions get more involved down the line? Is this a potential opening to help people more organically get to that longer-term goal of reducing duplicative services? Consider how tools like a resource list can contribute to the give-and-take of relationship building with both the public and key community stakeholders and leaders.

In regards to the larger point of a desire to have a more collaborative approach in responding to children and family needs, consider the points under key finding 1. Also, one key informant suggested asking about children at every service intake point. For instance, if an adult is seeking services for alcohol abuse, ask if they have children. Chances are if the adult is at the point of seeking help, there has been a long-standing history with the problem which means their children will have been suffering too.

3. Poverty must be acknowledged and addressed. It is a cycle that perpetuates and intensifies.

At least 6 of the 8 key informants indicated poverty and families’ struggles to make ends meet as having major impacts on children’s wellbeing and general health. This overwhelming majority of key informants recognized that when a family is struggling to make ends meet all other issues are trumped by trying to survive.

Key informants also indicated when left unattended, the cycle of poverty will continue and intensify. Key informants said that today we can see the correlation between poverty and adverse elements and/or home characteristics like substance abuse, absent parents, single parent homes, domestic violence, and/or mental health issues. They felt that when parents have such problems and are generally ill-prepared to take care of themselves let alone children, children will suffer horribly.

Yet, as mentioned in key finding 1, key informants recognize these problems may seem overwhelming to the public. Additionally, at least three key informants indicated the community has a sense of denial and/or ignorance about the severity of poverty and the other issues poverty correlates to.

Applying This Finding

Much of what is explored in key finding 1 is relevant here. Are there immediate service responses that can help populations impacted by poverty? Can the case be made that those immediate responses feed into the ELC’s work on the core issue(s)? Some key informants are indicating not all problems are created equal and that without addressing poverty no real change in school readiness percentages or school performance outcomes for older children will be seen.

CONFIDENTIAL, Key Informant Interview Key Findings, August 2009
Consider whether general awareness about the “problem” the ELC is addressing includes describing features of poverty versus naming poverty. Given that key informants said the general public in Walla Walla is not aware there is a homeless population, or that teen pregnancy rates are high and among the worse in the state, or that poverty is as pervasive as it is, how can general awareness tactics be used to penetrate this level of denial and/or misinformation? Two key informants suggested a general ad campaign on television would be helpful.

Taking a step back, who are the most important audiences to capture? What messages do they need to hear and from whom? What audiences will not be able to be won over?

Taking another step back, how big is the ELC willing to go to reach their goals? Are the systemic issues of poverty too big for the ELC to beat? Where does the ELC stand on addressing systemic issues of poverty?

4. **Teenage pregnancy and gang presence are both pressing problems.**

   Teenage pregnancy and gang presence are seen as the next tier of urgent problems to deal with after poverty and critical issues key informants see as related to poverty (i.e. lack of stable housing, substance abuse, domestic abuse).

   In response to question 2 (“What types of family supports do you think would make a difference for your employees/families in the community?”), question 3 (“What do you think are the reasons many children are not successful in school and life and what might we do to change this?”), and question 4 (“What is at stake if we do not address the pressing issues facing children and families today?”) a number of key informants discussed teen pregnancy and gang presence as problems that need immediate attention because they are part of today’s families’ reality. They see these as some of the source of student/child suffering and poor performance, and as serious issues that will grow if left unattended.

   At least three key informants also indicated teenage pregnancy should not been seen as an appropriate goal and the prevalence of teenage pregnancy in the community is evidence that young girls are not getting positive role modeling to explore other goals such as a higher education or a career. Key informants also mentioned that while social services are important to support teenage mothers and their children, something must be done to change the expectation that it is society’s responsibility to care for them, not their own.

   **Apply This Finding**

   Two key informants mentioned a community center as an option to respond to a variety of problems including the more systemic reasons why children are not ready for school and the urgent needs of children today. For instance, one key informant indicated that if the library could be expanded and transformed into more of a community hub, service referral and application as well as increased exposure to literacy for young children could take place.

   Another key informant indicated children need a safe place to go after school and during school breaks. While the same key informant recognized that the bigger issues need to be addressed by starting with children when they are young, there is a real need to keep children safe from the grip of gangs today. When both parents are away from home working to make ends meet a child needs someone to take a positive interest in them. When a child is craving attention and modeling from adults, they will get it one way or another.
Related to key finding 2 in terms of better aligning services, what existing services can be utilized or expanded to reach teenage mothers and help keep children safe? Is there a collaborative approach that could help align and adapt existing services to attend to teenage pregnancy and gang activity?

Consider how the issues explored in key finding 3 affect public awareness of such problems.

5. **Family is the foundation. Education is the way.**

The majority of key informants expressed that family is the foundation of community and society as a whole. As the health of families is in jeopardy, so is the state of the community and of the global economy. Key informants see a restoration of values in family as critical. This is evidenced in spending time with each other and taking responsibility in raising children to be good lifelong learners and community-minded contributors.

Key informants believe a restoration in the value of education and an acceptance that it is the parents’ responsibility to help guide their child’s academic success is important. This is related to their hope to see parents financially providing for and being physically present and responsive to their children. Even if a child does not have a parent paying attention to their academic success, key informants believe if there is a larger value and focus placed on education by the community and society, children will see getting an education as the best way for them to succeed in life.

Two key informants mentioned misguided priorities as a real problem. For instance, once questioned why the world doesn’t celebrate scientists who find cures to diseases more than it celebrates athletes. Another indicated a family in the Valley threw a block party for one son who returned from prison after serving time for a serious crime but ignored the other son’s achievement of graduating from college. These two key informants and others said children are watching and what parents and adults model as important values has an influence.

**Applying This Finding**

A few key informants mentioned that schools and churches cannot and should not be entirely responsible for the academic and religious teaching of children. They said parents need to be the primary guider for their children in these areas but that the community as a whole must support them. Consider what community support and/or community building approaches can be taken to promote a sense of “parents first and together with community.” Also, who are the appropriate faith and school leaders to model “parents first and together with church” and “together with schools”?

Consider the community center approach mentioned in key finding 4. How can a value on families spending time together and children focusing on and taking pride in their academic success be modeled and nurtured on a community-wide level?

6. **Parent education is a key need. Yet, a paradigm shift is required.**

All key informants believe parents today need help. Key informants seem to also believe that parents are trying their best but modeling by what they see in their environment has a strong influence on their ideas about parenting. Key informants acknowledge that help looks different to different families. But at least three
key informants also recognize that help must come in a safe package and that parents must be spoken with not spoke to. Parents must not be treated as though they are failures for getting help.

Thus, key informants think parenting education and training is very important yet they say parents will not access it unless it is thought of as a good thing. They felt that this will take a change in thinking on everyone’s part. Parents must be ok with getting advice. People offering help must listen to parents, treat them with respect, and not tell them what to do without considering a family’s culture, values, traditions, and previous role modeling.

Applying This Finding

A number of key informants discussed the need for more outreach. Key informants believe this effort must meet parents where they are. Because parents are so stretched today, it is critical to go to them in their natural meeting spots (i.e. church, grocery store, restaurants, etc.) and reach them through places where children are (i.e. child care, preschool, school) in ways that are appropriate to their situation (teen mom, recent immigrant, long-time community member, etc.).

Key informants recognized that while poverty is a critical issue, families who do have means are still struggling with parenting. Consider whether the ELC supports a continuum of services that aims to address needed supports for all parents. Will there be a focus on a high-priority population?
WHY TEENS ARE NOT INVOLVED IN OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME PROGRAMS: THE YOUTH PERSPECTIVE
Mary Terzian, Ph.D., M.S.W., Lindsay Giesen, B.A., and Kassim Mbwana, M.P.P.

OVERVIEW
To better understand why youth do not participate in out-of-school time programs, Child Trends invited adolescents who were not affiliated with out-of-school time programs to participate in a Youth Roundtable discussion. This Roundtable provided an opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of what program qualities are important to increase and maintain participation in out-of-school time programs. Youth identified 19 issues relating to barriers to participation and program improvement strategies. Barriers to participation ranged from a program being located in an unsafe or unfamiliar neighborhood to participation in a program being perceived in a negative light by parents and/or peers. Program improvement strategies ranged from teaching youth practical skills and addressing family issues to offering a variety of activities and hiring skilled, experienced staff. These findings should offer valuable insights to program providers and funders about program planning and design.

BACKGROUND
Involving children and adolescents, particularly those from low-income families, in out of school time programs can be a challenging task. It is estimated that children whose families live below 200 percent of the federal poverty line are 3 to 4 times more likely than children from higher income families to not be involved in any out-of-school-time activities. Sustaining participation in out-of-school time programs is another major challenge that out-of-school time program directors and staff face. A recent qualitative study conducted with 70 urban middle-school students suggests that adolescents drop out of out-of-school time programs because of issues related to program quality and content (for example, insufficient structure; lack of quality academic tutoring and access to fun activities, such as dance and photography; long program duration) and because of the presence of competing family and non-family-related activities (such as chores, babysitting, and participating in sports and religious activities). Additional research suggests that black and Hispanic youth, as well as low-income youth, are less likely to participate in out-of-school time activities and that, when they do, they participate less frequently. However, very little is known about why youth choose not to participate in the first place. The Youth Roundtable sought to address this knowledge gap by interviewing urban, low-income, primarily African American adolescents about why they or their friends might not participate in after-school or summer programs.
PARTICIPANTS

Fifteen adolescents (aged 13 to 18) from Washington, D.C., participated in the Roundtable in November 2008. They were recruited by their friends and by youth development staff at local community-based organizations. To encourage discussion, two smaller groups were formed—a younger, co-ed group comprised of adolescents between the ages of 12 and 17 and an older group comprised of 18-year-old males. The majority of the youth (13 out of 15) identified themselves as African American. Many participants noted that they had been in and out of different out-of-school time programs, but only five out of 15 participants (four females and one male) were currently involved in any out-of-school time program.

ISSUES DISCUSSED

During the discussions, Roundtable participants responded to a number of questions about youth participation, or a lack thereof, in out-of-school time programs. The Roundtable was organized around three main issues:

- Why youth do not participate in out-of-school time programs;
- How to recruit youth who do not participate in any programs; and
- How to make programs more accessible to nonparticipating youth.

YOUTH PERSPECTIVES – EMERGING THEMES

Roundtable participants spoke openly and shared opinions on all aspects of program operation. Nineteen themes emerged from this discussion. These themes are organized under the following topic headings: (1) why youth don’t attend programs; (2) how to get youth to show up; (3) what youth want in programs; and (4) what youth want in program staff. These topics, and their subthemes, are presented below. See Table 1 for a summary.

**TOPIC ONE: WHY YOUTH DON’T ATTEND PROGRAMS**

Youth identified several barriers to program participation, including issues related to poverty, family dynamics, and family and peer relationships. These barriers were:

- **Lack of awareness about out-of-school-time programs.** Participants noted that many children and youth are not aware of out-of-school time programs in their communities. Older participants, especially, knew little about programs and services for youth in their neighborhoods. Despite this lack of information, the teens expressed a desire to participate in out-of-school time programs. Among the programs that they knew about and recalled with enthusiasm were those that involved hands-on learning, such as a culinary arts program that teaches students how to cook and a learning center that couples academic instruction with a broad array of enrichment activities.

- **Concerns about neighborhood safety.** Young people in both groups said that neighborhood safety plays a key role in decisions about whether to participate in out-of-school time programs, especially when participation requires traveling through numerous neighborhoods. These safety concerns are compounded by drug and substance abuse problems that are prevalent in some neighborhoods. In one Roundtable member’s words,
“Some of the kids’ parents probably don’t trust that neighborhood, so they don’t send them to that program…they just want them to go straight home.”

Youth relationship dynamics and a fear of gang violence also impinge upon young people’s willingness to participate in out-of-school time programs. Roundtable participants agreed that youth would not go to a neighborhood where they did not know anyone, because they would not be wanted there. Several of the youth also mentioned the existence of “‘hood beats” —groups of youth who frequent specific streets and venues. These groups usually do not intermingle; and therefore teens in one group would not want to attend a program located in another group’s territory, where they would be viewed as outsiders.

- **Lack of caring adults.** Both groups cited a lack of positive and caring adult role models as a reason for non-participation in out-of-school time programs. One teen mentioned that someone might not want to participate because “no one respected them or paid attention to them when they were younger, and they wonder why people would care now.” This perception suggests that having a history of good peer and adult relationships may increase the likelihood that a young person will decide to invest in a program, an idea that is echoed in the section of this brief on ideal program staff. (See Topic Four.)

- **Financial problems; need to work or care for siblings.** Other barriers noted by both groups were inadequate household income and the pressure of family responsibilities. Parents who were at work during out-of-school time hours often relied on their older children to take care of their younger siblings. Other youth used out-of-school time hours to work and supplement household income or earn pocket change. In addition, some teens mentioned the cost of transportation as a hindrance to program participation. Others thought that earning a stipend for attending out-of-school time programs would increase participation rates. The idea of using incentives to boost program attendance is touched on later in this brief. (See Topic Two.)

- **Negative Perception or Stigma**

  **Their own perceptions.** Roundtable participants in the older group mentioned several other reasons for their own non-participation. Some said youth did not want to participate in out-of-school-time programs because they perceived them to be work-intensive and not fun. Others said youth chose not to participate in some programs because they felt the programs emphasized recreational activities at the expense of activities that had more academic rigor, such as tutoring and homework sessions. These divergent interests suggest a need for varied types of activities and/or programs.

  **Parents’ perceptions.** A parent’s poor impression of a program can also be a barrier to youth participation. Roundtable participants mentioned that some parents had reservations about programs that were not clearly structured around enhancing academic achievement by providing tutoring or scheduled time for completing homework. Parents often looked at the quality of the staff and its ability to “provide the right tools” to ensure academic success for their children. Therefore, using parents to increase youth
participation in programs might prove to be an effective strategy if parents are convinced of the benefits of this participation.

**Peers’ perceptions.** Teens in both Roundtable groups mentioned that peers’ negative perceptions of out-of-school time programs might dissuade some youth from participation in these programs. In other words, if participating in a certain program, or any program, is seen as “uncool,” youth will be less likely to attend. Tutoring programs were mentioned as a potential source of embarrassment because participation runs the risk of sending a message to peers that the person being tutored is stupid or a “nerd”. All participants mentioned a need for sensitivity among teachers or mentors who want to enroll students in tutoring services. The teens pointed out that if peers overhear a teacher recommending tutoring services to a student, it could lead to teasing.

**TOPIC TWO: HOW TO GET YOUTH TO SHOW UP**

Recruitment is one of the biggest challenges that out-of-school time program administrators must address. Teens said they often heard about out-of-school time programs in school announcements geared towards helping them fulfill high school requirements. They also found out about out-of-school time programs by going to community centers in their neighborhoods and by talking to their friends. Overall, Roundtable participants felt that programs could be more creative about reaching more youth. Whereas the teens thought that announcements during school hours and word of mouth could continue to play a key role in program recruitment and advertising, they also suggested some additional strategies to reach more youth. In particular, they recommended that programs:

- **Use peer recruiters.** Peers generate the most buzz about a program, and were deemed the most reliable source of information. All participants agreed that they were more likely to trust peer reviews of a program than almost anything else. The use of program ambassadors—peers who currently participate in the program—is known to be an effective peer recruiting strategy. Although one participant also noted that teens might accept a coach’s opinion about a program, most participants agreed that they would be less likely, if at all, to listen to a program recommendation made by a teacher or a parent.

- **Use engaging advertisements.** When asked if flyers are a good way to get young people’s attention, Roundtable participants’ responses were mixed. Teens in the younger group agreed that, for a flyer to successfully spark their interest and prompt them to follow up, it should be funny, big, and include pictures and text that send the message “There’s something here for everyone.” Those in the older group echoed these sentiments, stating that flyers should be “flashy” and “cool”. They also said that flyers should be distributed at places like concert venues, urban clothing stores, electronics stores, and at subway and bus stops, or should mailed directly to young people’s homes. T-shirts were also mentioned as another way to advertise out-of-school time programs, with wearers, in essence, serving as walking billboards for these programs.

- **Use electronic media.** Roundtable participants also noted that the use of electronic media, such as the online social networking sites Facebook and MySpace, could be additional means of reaching youth, as could radio and television programs targeted at
youth. Participants added that out-of-school time programs could be featured in local radio and television programs, and parents could be reached using advertisements aired during community news shows. It was noted that youth are also responsive to local artists and musicians who promote activities to youth. One older student cited a popular rapper’s promotion of voting on high school campuses as an example of an effective strategy for reaching and retaining young people’s attention.

- **Involve parents.** Some teens in the older group thought that involving parents early in the recruitment process was important in getting teens to participate. For example, parents and teens could learn about different out-of-school time programs in their communities at cookouts or parties, as well as during parent-teacher conferences. Schools could also convene community meetings to talk about varied out-of-school time programs.

- **Improve parents’ perceptions.** When asked about how parents perceive out-of-school time programs, most Roundtable participants reported that parents generally like having their children involved in such programs—saying their parents were happy to have them participate in any activity that kept them “off the streets.” One teen noted that a parent might be willing to give any program a chance if it encourages youth to do positive things and make positive influences.

However, others mentioned that some parents may have a negative perception of the program, not knowing whether their children would have adequate supervision and/or exposure to negative peer influence.

- **Use incentives.** Finally, Roundtable participants agreed that the use of incentives (such as food, transportation tokens or services, and other “free” commodities or benefits) would encourage them to attend a program. Providing snacks was important because teens are usually hungry after school and are accustomed to eating at this time. Some programs also offer points for participation that youth can cash in for free goods.

**Topic Three: What Youth Want in Programs**

Roundtable participants mentioned several program characteristics that they felt would make out-of-school time programs more appealing to them and to their nonparticipating peers. Several of these characteristics correspond with youth reports already published in the literature on out-of-school time.8 Roundtable participants agreed that out-of-school time programs would be more successful at engaging and retaining youth if they took the following actions:

- **Build in flexibility.** Teens in the younger group described frustration about the rules established at some out-of-school time program sites. Some programs regulate how much time participants spend doing homework, where they are allowed to eat, what clothes they can wear in the gym, and how much time they are allotted to use certain facilities. Teens in this group described a preference for activities that are less structured and more relevant to their interests. In the words of one participant, programs and staff need to “let kids be kids.” However, we know from research on effective programs that it is also important to balance flexibility with age-appropriate supervision and structure.9
• **Offer a variety of activities.** Roundtable participants emphasized the need for programs to offer a variety of activities that appeal to both genders and to different ages. Youth in the older group expressed an interest in programs that offer a balance among academics, sports and leisure, and hands-on learning experiences. The younger group suggested activities such as playing video games, working on arts and crafts projects, participating in dance and sports, taking cooking and computer lessons, and receiving some sort of job training. Basketball, football, boxing, weight training, ping pong, and other sports and related physical activities were also mentioned. Sports tournaments were also suggested; teens thought they would offer the opportunity for youth to meet kids from different neighborhoods and make new friends. Roundtable participants also observed that providing youth with opportunities to compose music, learn a musical instrument, act, make movies, or engage in journalism could provide hands-on learning experiences that could offset the rigors of tutoring or completing homework assignments while involved in an out-of-school time program. Participants also repeatedly suggested field trips as a way to boost regular attendance and youth engagement.

• **Portray the program accurately.** Related to the issue above, Roundtable participants emphasized the importance of describing program activities accurately, so that young people could decide to participate based on a true picture of what the program offered. If that does not happen, young people might feel that they have been misled.

• **Teach practical skills.** Participants also stressed a need for opportunities to learn and practice important practical and job-related skills. For example, programs might offer computer, software, and information systems job-skills training, as well as vocational training. Making solar-powered cars was suggested in one group. Participants also noted that young people want programs to connect them with jobs or internships that give them professional experience and skills to help them support themselves after high school. Thus, they were seeking activities and programs that would help them become more self-sufficient, but that were also dynamic and fun.

• **Address family issues.** Participants in the older group suggested that programs could also address family issues, such as dealing with a parent or family member who was addicted to drugs or alcohol, improving communication skills between youth and their parents, and teaching parenting skills to teen parents.

• **Offer a convenient location and hours.** Participants were split on the ideal access to out-of-school time programs. Some preferred that these programs be established in neighborhoods as close as possible to their homes, while others preferred “safer” venues, such as local churches and universities. They also thought that the most convenient times for out-of-time programs were after 4 p.m. and ending between 6:30 and 8 p.m. These times would enable students to have at least half an hour to relax between when school would let out and when a program would start. Participants also expressed the view that convenient Saturday hours for programs to be held would be between 12:30 and 6 p.m., while convenient Sunday hours would be between 2:30 and 4 p.m.
Participants in the Roundtable also discussed the need for programs to have high-quality staff. When asked what an ideal staff person might look like, they answered that it would be someone who treats young people with respect and who is skilled at working with youth.

- **People who treat youth with respect.** Participants in the older group noted that youth want to be treated with respect by program staff. To them, being treated with respect meant being treated in a developmentally appropriate way. Thus, staff members would listen to what they had to say and allow them to have more responsibility and freedom than they allowed younger participants in the program. Youth in the Roundtable also described frustration with the occasionally stringent rules that characterized some programs. According to one participant, the restrictions some programs placed on teens’ activities and movements conveyed the message that teens could not be trusted.

- **People who are skilled at working with youth.** Participants preferred having program staff members who work well with youth in that they are able to maintain boundaries, are not too strict, and structure program activities in an organized way. Skilled staff members should also be good leaders, role models, and mentors, Roundtable participants agreed. Some teens mentioned that they preferred individuals who have children themselves because “they know how to treat kids.” These staff members were thought to be more capable of relating to the issues youth face in their daily lives. Additionally, participants emphasized that youth want program staff to teach them and model how to strike a balance between work and play. A few members of the older group also described an interest in adults who could teach them about parenting. An unskilled staff person was described as someone who has trouble maintaining boundaries (i.e., acting like a peer) or someone youth in the program might consider a peer or in their age group (e.g., a high school student).

### Table 1: Summary of Roundtable Themes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Why Youth Don’t Attend Out-of-School-Time Programs</th>
<th>How to Get Youth to Show Up</th>
<th>What Youth Want in Programs</th>
<th>What Youth Want in Program Staff</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. Concerns about neighborhood safety</td>
<td>7. Use engaging advertisements</td>
<td>13. Offer a variety of activities (age and gender appropriate)</td>
<td>19. People who are skilled at working with youth</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Financial problems/need to work or care for siblings</td>
<td>8. Use electronic media</td>
<td>14. Portray the program accurately</td>
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<td>4. Lack of caring staff</td>
<td>9. Involve parents</td>
<td>15. Teach practical skills</td>
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<td>5. Negative perception of program/stigma of “not cool”</td>
<td>10. Improve parents’ perceptions</td>
<td>16. Address family issues (e.g., drugs)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>11. Use incentives</td>
<td>17. Offer a convenient location and hours</td>
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CONCLUSION

Out-of-school time programs can provide valuable supports to the positive development of children and youth. These programs can help cultivate social and emotional skills, and further students’ academic achievements. Furthermore, the safe environment provided by out-of-school time programs can offer children and youth, especially those living in disadvantaged urban areas, a welcome retreat from the streets and a place to be with friends.

Analyzing parent report data from the 2003 National Survey of Children’s Health (NSCH), Child Trends estimated that ten percent of teens in higher-income families do not participate in any activities, compared with 30 percent of teens in families living below 200 percent of the federal poverty line. Most Youth Roundtable participants implied that they have experienced financial problems, which could decrease the chances that they will participate in programs, as could “hood beats” and other safety concerns. However, youth in situations and environments similar to those experienced by the Roundtable participants might benefit the most from out-of-school time programs in that they provide stable environments in which young people can meet, grow, and interact with each other.

Overall, Youth Roundtable participants mentioned numerous and varied reasons why youth do not get involved and eagerly shared their thoughts on how program providers can increase and maintain participation. For example, using peer recruiters, involving parents, offering activities for a variety of interests, and hiring competent, respectful staff are all ways to increase program recruitment, participation, and retention. While many at the Roundtable expressed frustrations with available programs, all of the participants voiced a clear desire to be involved in out-of-school time programs and requested that more opportunities be made available to them.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors would like to thank Priscilla M.D. Little, Ph.D. for her careful review of and helpful comments on this research brief.

Editor: Harriet J. Scarupa
ENDNOTES

1 This roundtable was conducted as part of our work with Atlantic Philanthropies and was not intended for dissemination. However, because we felt these findings were of interest to program providers, we decided to share them with the practice community.


3 Okeke, L. Attrition in adolescent after-school programs: Addressing the concern via interviews with program dropouts. Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 3(3).


6 Six out of eight participants in the younger group and all seven participants in the older group identified themselves as African American. The other two participants self-identified as Moroccan and ‘Other’.


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Purpose of the ELC

- Build a comprehensive, sustainable Early Learning System
- Focus on children birth to age five
- Partner with existing programs
- Provide parents & caregivers with the tools they need to be successful

Goal

All children are healthy and ready for school & for life

Walla Walla County Demographics

- 3,515 Birth to Five
- 39% Hispanic
- 589 Enrolled in Public Kindergarten 2008
- 1,122 Potential Openings in Licensed Child Care
- 157 under 5 years homeless in 2008
- 4th Highest Teen Pregnancy Rate in the State
- 2nd Highest Low Birth Weight Rate in the State

Parents Needs Assessment

- Michelle Janning, Ph.D. & Lydia Hayes, Whitman College Department of Sociology
- August 2008 – March 2009
- 1,115 Parent Surveys Distributed (English & Spanish)
- 59 Stakeholders Responded
- 398 Total Surveys Returned

Physical Health & Medicine

Parents are satisfied with access to medical care, but request more resources devoted to care of children with special medical needs

- 10% do not have access to dental care
- 5% do not have access to prenatal care
- 5% do not have health/development screenings
Social, Emotional, & Mental Health
- 23% dissatisfied with children’s mental health services
- 18% do not know how to access community resources
- 18% do not have easy access to appropriate services and supports for children with special needs

Social, Emotional, & Mental Health cont.
- 15% disagree that many services are available to help identify special needs at an early age
- 10% disagree that the community supports emotional and mental health needs

Early Care & Education/Child Care
- 20% indicate child care/early learning centers are not easy to find
- 12% use child care that is not close to their home and not affordable
- 10% indicate the operating hours do not meet their needs

Parenting Information & Support
- 50% indicate parenting help is not available
- 46% do not use the public library
- 33% indicate no identifiable, accessible place to receive parenting information

Parenting Information & Support cont.
- 24% have not taken parenting classes
- 10% report lack of resources to prepare their children for kindergarten

Requested Parenting Resources
- 61% Affordable Childcare
- 53% In-Person Parenting Help
- 37% Access to Other Parents
- 36% Books, Magazines, Internet
- 33% Children’s Books
Overall Community

- 39% respond volunteerism is not strong when it comes to our youngest children
- 36% indicate family activities are not well advertised
- 32% note child-friendly environments/family-oriented activities are not abundant
- 10% report their child and family are not thriving

Comments from Parents

“Beyond basic pediatrics, many child-specific medical/mental health services are not available or very limited.”

“Very hard to find infant care.”

“I would like more access to parenting class, seminars, etc., and more info about if these opportunities even exist.”

“There is absolutely no place to take my very active preschooler to run off steam in the cold months.”

Kindergarten Readiness

Parents Perspective

- Very Ready, 51%
- Mostly Ready, 35%
- Not Sure, 8%
- Not Ready at All, 6%

Areas for Growth

Parents Perspective

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Physical Growth or Health</th>
<th>Social or Emotional Growth or Mental Health</th>
<th>Academic Ability</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not Sure</td>
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<td>36%</td>
<td>59%</td>
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Recommendations

- Improve access to resources to prepare children for kindergarten
- Engage policy makers to improve conditions for local children and families
- Simplify access to resources for children with special needs

Recommendations cont.

- Create central and easy-to-access location for parent resources
- Increase year-round family activities for children birth to five
Next Steps

- Early Learning Event for Business Community, October 7th

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