



Family Listening Session

Hearing from Parents About Their Child Care Needs

OCDC Chiloquin

In January, 2020, a listening session with parents and caregivers was held at the Oregon Child Development Coalition (OCDC) Chiloquin site. This listening session was part of a series of family listening sessions funded by the Preschool Development Grant. The listening session was co-designed and organized by OCDC and AB Cultural Drivers in partnership with OSLC Developments, Inc. and Portland State University. The goal of the listening session was to hear family voices from local tribal members and other communities that have not yet been heard in the conversation of early learning needs and experiences. The listening session was held in English with six parents and caregivers, which included three mothers of young children, one father, one grandmother, and one uncle. In addition, the director of the OCDC Chiloquin site and a home visitor were also present during the listening session.

Current Child Care Experiences and Building School Readiness

Who takes care of your young children ages 0-5 years?

Three families had young children who were enrolled in the OCDC classroom, one of which attended the tribal day care as well. In addition to OCDC, parents had the support of their families to look after their children. However, making child care work was challenging for these families (see below).

Opportunities to Celebrate and Practice Your Family's Traditions, Culture, and Language

One family recommended that the OCDC classroom offer lessons in the Klamath language. The other families in the listening session agreed that this would be a beneficial practice, along with the inclusion of native educational content and healthy foods.

"Klamath has been a real effort, a concerted effort for us. My sister, their mom, has done it [Klamath language] as well since they were born. In the last two years, our speaking community has grown. We've been able to include and do [Klamath language]. We had a session where we came and taught songs, numbers, colors, and animals. I think that was through the tribal daycare program. Me and one of our linguists so it's been an effort the last year more so than previous years and so hoping that momentum really continues on with the youth."

"They [the children] have larger vocabularies at times than I do. So I can ask them what animals are and they can tell me. That's been really cool, that interplay has been trading language with them. So if that could continue and if we could get trainings for staff that would be amazing to keep that momentum going on with the youth."

"If there were some stories about creation, some basic stories that we could teach our youth. I worked on a research project before and one of the things that we did for another tribe was we recorded five of their stories for the head start program and they started implementing those stories and the tribe felt like those were the important stories...so we hired a producer and we did these stories on the reservation. Then we made them into CDs, the head start teachers implemented those in the class. I really think that's important because when our children know who they are and where they come from that gives them a solid foundation to grow from."

"First food would be really great as well. Connections, we try to do a lot of first foods in our house...For the other two kids and the rest of our tribal children if there was some kind of availability for them to practice first food traditions here [OCDC], that would be amazing. But that would be like magic wand kind of thing. I've never heard that they eat bad here but getting them on deer, elk, salmon, those are superfoods that we have available to us and that would be great for our children to be on. For it to be natural to them...One benefit is connection to the land, we're here and we've subsisted off of traditional diets for a long time. That's a part of celebrating our identity and our longevity. Almost all of our kids eat sugary diets today and there's very few affordable places for us to get quality food in Klamath Falls. It's weird because we are a ranching, farming community. For us to get cheap organic foods, I'll drive to Eugene, I'll drive to Ashland to get groceries because Sherms is okay and we just opened Natural Grocers, which is amazing but it's taken this long and it's still expensive."

This family also reflected on their positive experience in the elementary school and their desire to see this in the new OCDC building.

"Currently our elementary is culturally sensitive. It's a welcoming environment when you walk in the door at the elementary it looks like there's natives at the school. You know, the way it looks, the way it appears. I think that that's helpful. It would be helpful here too if we had some more of our language and animals and colors and the numbers to help our children be able to relate to that."

Benefits of Early Learning

Parents and caregivers mentioned multiple benefits of their children participating in an early learning program. This included, learning how to listen to teachers, developing social skills by being around children other than their siblings, learning a routine, academic stimuli, and helping children be ready for school.

"For my nephew the introduction to more learning time and less play time was rough but at the same time, healthy."

"We really want that, we want our kids to be ready. It's hard enough in the school systems we really need to figure out how to help our kids to be ready for that."

Parents noticed that their children had gained social-emotional skills since attending preschool like being more outgoing and learning to share. One family's child had only been attending the program for a couple of weeks so they had not yet seen the benefits that other families have seen in their young ones who were in their second year of preschool. The home visitor told the family that she has noticed their child has the routine down and that he interacts with the other children in the classroom.

Challenges and Obstacles

Finding affordable care and managing child care arrangements was challenging for these families, for a variety of reasons. Even those who participated in the OCDC program described challenges due to families' busy schedules and the logistics of coordinating pick up, drop off, and coverage of care if things came up like doctor's appointments. In addition, some family members live up to an hour or more away so parents have to travel long distances on often treacherous roads in order to get care for their young ones.

"I work full time and their dad works seasonal so right now they stay home with dad when they're not at school. When he goes back to work, I have no idea what I'm going to do with them. And I'll have three, I have another one on the way. I might have to stay home with the kids because I don't have child care. I've tried three years to get him into daycare here and there's a waiting list and at the time I was working night shift so it didn't even help out. So now I'm working in the mornings and I've been trying to get him in daycare, still."

"When he [child's father] was in Eugene we'd tell him something's up so he would come down here to cover what's necessary. Because we don't have reliable child care here. We don't have anybody we can trust. I think that's real."

All families mentioned that there is a lack of child care in Chiloquin that they would trust to leave their young ones.

"It's hard to trust someone that you don't know super personally. I don't think I could just drop my kids off at somebody's house. Even if they are through DHS or whatever."

As mentioned previously, one parent has not been able to find child care for their young children due to being over income for the OCDC classroom and a lack of trusting child care options in Chiloquin, which other parents echoed. This family had to have one of the parents stop working in order to provide care for their young ones. Other parents also shared that due to high costs of child care it was cheaper and preferable for them to stay home with their young children.

"For some of the daycares in town [Klamath Falls] if we had both kids in care it would almost be \$1000 a month so it'd be pointless for me to work if I'm going to be paying for daycare because I'd be working to pay for daycare. So I'd rather stay home with my kids if I'm going to be paying that much. \$200 a month would be reasonable. It'd be very hard for me to go to work and have someone else taking care of my kids all day and I'm not raising them...just to have them go to daycare so it'd have to be pretty cheap because it's hard to go to work just to pay for that."



All families said that there are no local activities or opportunities for early learning experiences for when there is no school.

"The park isn't really safe to take the kids to. It's not like they can go hang out in the park like in Eugene or other places you can take your kids to the park. You don't really want to do that, it's not really a safe place to be. You find stuff in the park that shouldn't be there. There's behaviors in the park that shouldn't, little kids shouldn't have to see."

Even though the tribal day care and the OCDC classroom are in the same building, families who need to get children to different classrooms to cover the need for full day care reported challenges managing these arrangements.



Key Takeaways

- ▶ Families in Chiloquin have a trustworthy and quality child care program through OCDC, however, not all families get to benefit from their services and families need extended hours—7:00am to 6:00pm, ideally.
- ▶ Families would like Klamath language, stories, and first foods integrated into their children’s early care experiences and environment.
- ▶ Most families have seen the development of academic and social-emotional skills in their children attending the OCDC classroom.
- ▶ Chiloquin needs safe and clean spaces to play and additional educational services for their young ones when school is out.
- ▶ There is clearly a challenge in having access to close, affordable, trusted child care that meets the needs of these busy working families.

What would your ideal child care situation look like?

All parents said that they would ideally have child care in the new OCDC building where some of their children were already attending a half-day program. Full daycare was a clear priority, with parents saying it would be better if the program went from 7:00am to 5:30-6:00pm or at least 3:00pm with the option of an after school program. It would also be ideal if this program was year around, including school breaks, rather than just seasonal.

“It’s amazing right now that he can transition in the same building from tribal day care to OCDC but just a full day of OCDC would be preferable.”

“That’s huge here in Chiloquin, because there’s nothing for our youth to do. Like on spring break and summer time, our kids don’t have anything. If you live right in Chiloquin it’s really hard and I’m sure living outside of Chiloquin is hard too. Like there’s no program to take your kid or have somebody take your kid to the library, you know like when you’re in a city. You can hire somebody to take your kid to the library for story time and have a full day of stuff. We don’t have those options here.”

Ideally having the option of bus transportation or early drop off would be parents preferred way of having their child arrive to school.

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