



Family Listening Session

Hearing from Parents About Their Child Care Needs

OCDC Madras

In January 2020, a listening session with parents and caregivers was held at the Oregon Child Development Coalition (OCDC) Madras site. This listening session was part of a series of family listening sessions funded by the Preschool Development Grant as part of a statewide early learning needs assessment. 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 that have not yet been captured in the conversation of early learning needs and experiences. The listening session was held in Spanish with 10 parents and caregivers, which included 8 mothers and 2 fathers. In addition, the OCDC Lead Family Services and Health Specialist and a home visitor were also present during the listening session.

Early Learning Experiences

All parents in the listening session had children in an OCDC classroom, in addition to OCDC parents had family members or another center-based care to fill in for parents who needed care outside of the half-day OCDC classroom. Parents said that OCDC has helped their children be comfortable with other children, follow rules and a routine, refine their fine motor skills, learn language and vocabulary, and to be more comfortable in a school environment and become more independent.

"Before OCDC he was closed down, one of the teachers helped my child a lot. She provided an area for my child with toys that he could share with his friends and he understood that and that really helped."

Una de sus maestras... Ella le ayudó, le dijo 'ésta es tu área de juguetes', para ayudarlo cuando no quería quedarse en la escuela...ella le explicó' es tu área pero vas a compartir' y él entendió que era para que él se adaptara y se sintiera cómodo."



Their Ideal Child Care

Ideally, parents would prefer that OCDC could cover all of their child care needs for a full day of care from 7:30am. to 5:00pm. Additional child care needs included during evening college classes, when OCDC closes due to weather or training days. Parents would prefer bus transportation for their young ones to arrive at school. In addition to the learning children are already experiencing at OCDC, parents would like more physical activities like skateboarding, rock climbing, an outdoor jungle gym, sports like soccer, T-ball, basketball, dancing, swimming—as well as other outdoor activities like gardening and composting.

“They formed relationship with the teachers, they show that they’re not only teachers it feels like they’re a second mom because they take responsibility. You can tell when the children come to school they are happy and trust since they’ve built that relationship.”

“Forman la relación con sus maestras, con sus educadores, agarran esa confianza porque las maestras les muestran...que básicamente son sus madres...ahí se nota cuando los niños vienen a la escuela contentos es porque se sienten protegidos por el maestro, forman esa relación.”

In addition, a couple parents commented that they have good communication with their child’s teacher.

“She would tell me her schedule of activities with the child and on the weekends, I would keep the same routine so that would help my child. I would support what they were doing at school and do the same routine at home so that the child wouldn’t be confused. There was always good communication. I would tell the teacher what I wasn’t doing at home so that they wouldn’t do that at school.”

“Ella diciéndome su schedule y lo continuaba los fines de semana para que estuviéramos en la misma página...nosotros hablamos mucho con la maestra. Yo le hago support her para que sea lo mismo y no esté confundido el niño...mantenemos la comunicación...”

“The teachers always say hello to my children and are attentive. They would let the parents know what type of day they had, what they ate, how she slept. The team that they have is really good.”

“...Voy llegando con mi hija y todos: ‘hola! hola!’, son bien attentive y cuando llegamos a recogerlos la maestra nos deja saber sobre su día...si comió mucho o durmió mucho...las maestras y el equipo que tienen aquí está bueno.”

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

Last year OCDC held an event *All Around the World* for all their children and families. Each classroom was a different county and had different activities. One parent said, “...my children liked it a lot.” In addition, parents said that the OCDC teachers speak Spanish and English, they play music in English and Spanish, the food provided is from different cultures, and each classroom is decorated with different cultural pictures.

Support for Transitioning to Kindergarten

Parents said that OCDC helps to support their children to transition into kindergarten by teaching them to recognize their name, spelling their name, supporting early mathematics, conducting developmental assessments and connecting the family and child to health or special education services or other supports that may be needed. In addition, OCDC has supported parents in preparing for kindergarten by helping a parent to fill out the application for kindergarten.

Key Takeaways

- ▶ Parents and children at OCDC Madras have a trusting and supportive relationship with the teachers and staff.
- ▶ Parents have noticed the learning and socio-emotional development of their children from participating in OCDC.
- ▶ Parents felt that the OCDC Madras program supports their family's culture, language, and traditions.
- ▶ Parents mentioned several ways that OCDC Madras has supported their family through service referral and providing a welcoming, caring environment.
- ▶ Ideally, parents would like OCDC to provide full day services, bus transportation, and connect families with affordable, trusting child care services for when OCDC is closed.



Support for Parents and Caregivers

Parents also spoke about the support they've received by OCDC outside of early learning and care, which included resources for NeighborImpact, 211, the food bank, and addiction services. One parent said that the staff at OCDC provide services and referrals without judgement that **"There's a positivity of the staff here."** One family experienced a tragedy where they lost their home and said that, **"everyone [parents and staff] at OCDC helped and donated things. They were like family. They always help, and if they can't, they try to help...It was a community that helped us a lot."**

"I really trust this facility because they help you grow as a parent."

Challenges and Barriers

One parent commented that quality child care is expensive and "If they don't have a license it's cheaper but not as safe." A couple of other parents also mentioned past negative experiences with informal care and the lack of trust they feel for inexpensive child care options in their area. Two families have to work opposite shifts as their partner in order to cover child care.

"It's exhausting, I would get home and then she would take off. Even when she first started graveyards, it was hard because I missed her. It stressed out our relationship, we fought a lot."

Parents would like to spend more time with their young ones and have more support in supporting their young ones during difficult times.

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CULTIVATING OUR CHILDREN'S FUTURE

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