

Key Findings


In February 2021, Sawtooth Mountain Clinic (SMC), with support from Grand Portage Band of Lake Superior Chippewa, Cook County School District ISD166 and Cook County Public Health and Human Services, as well as many other local organizations, was awarded the 2-year Community-based Navigation Model, Local Community Resource Hub grant from the Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) (2021-2022, Track 2). The Hub Model ultimately seeks to increase relationship-based, universal and equitable access to programs and services for families with young children, prenatal to 5 years of age. As a Track 2 grantee, Year 1 (2021) is dedicated to capacity building, needs assessments and research, as well as ongoing collaborative relationship building with community partners and families. Wilder Research supported the SMC Hub Team in planning the future Hub Model by conducting key informant phone interviews with 20 community partners representing 19 agencies; a web-based survey of 32 parents with children age 5 and under advertised via flyers and social media; and analyzing demographic data from the U.S. Census Bureau and Minnesota's Center for Health Statistics. Year 2 (2022), informed by Year 1, transitions into full model implementation.


Key Findings

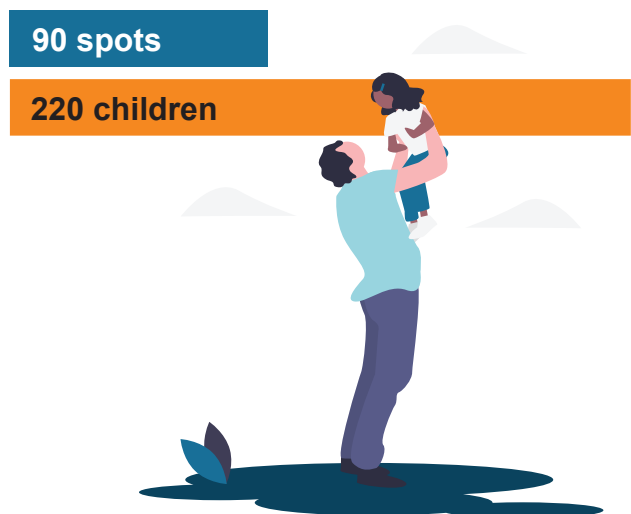
1. Child care is the greatest unmet need in Cook County.

★ Support child care providers to expand and increase child care spots.

Cook County has **90 licensed child spots** for children under age 5, yet **220 children** age 5 and under live in households with all parents working.

 Community partners overwhelmingly said child care was an unmet family need in Cook County.

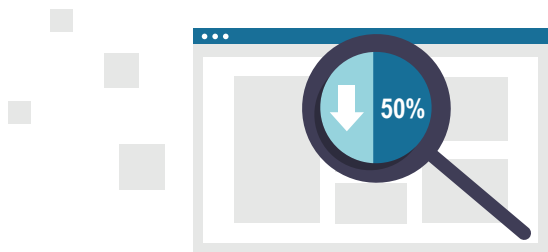
 In the parent survey, child care was the most commonly identified unmet need, especially child care for infants and toddlers.



2. Lack of awareness and isolation prevents families from accessing services.

★ A Community Navigator position would help link families to existing services.

In a web survey, **less than half of parents were aware of universal programs like Follow Along, Early Childhood Family Education, and home visiting**; and a majority reported finding out about programs via word-of-mouth rather than official channels.



The second most common barrier parents identified to participating in early childhood programming was lack of awareness of existing programs.



Community partners indicated families often reached by existing early childhood programming are those that are already connected to a service system or a resource hub.

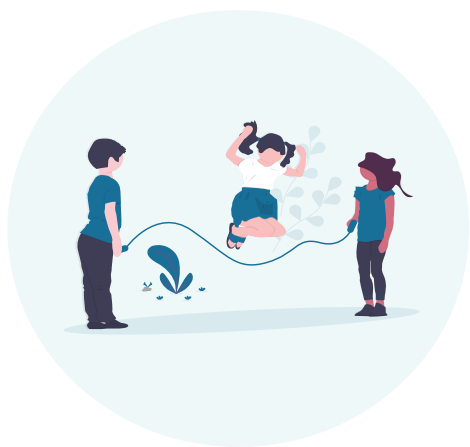


Community partners believed a Community Navigator would be an asset to the community by helping to build connections and relieving the pressure of currently overburdened staff.

3. Parents are seeking recreational activities and parental support.

★ Build collaborations among existing organizations to provide free or low cost parent and child programming.

In a web survey, parents indicated they are **seeking activities for themselves and their children**, primarily for their children to develop socialization skills and for them to get peer support.



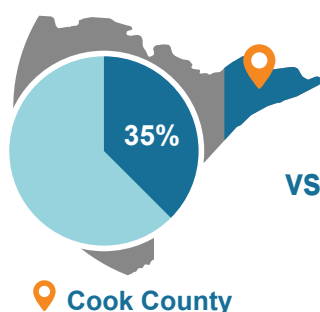
Parent support was the third highest ranked need in the community by parents themselves.



Community partners indicated there are opportunities for increased collaboration.



Over a third of Cook County families are living in poverty compared to a fifth of families statewide, emphasizing the need for free or low-cost programming.



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