

Let's Talk about Safe Kids and Strong Families!



“Being a parent is part natural and part learned. Everybody needs help.”

- Community café participant

Produced for the Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS), Service Array Section of the Office of Children's Services (OCS) and participating communities.

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Prepared by Agnew::Beck Consulting, LLC
www.agnewbeck.com

Acknowledgements + Thanks

The information summarized in this report will provide valuable guidance to each of the communities that participated and to the Department of Health and Social Services to improve and focus the services and programs it supports and delivers. Our hope is that the qualitative information provided through this effort will inform and improve the delivery of prevention and family support efforts across the state. This project was sponsored by the Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS), Service Array Section of the Office of Children's Services (OCS), which contracted with Agnew::Beck Consulting to work with local planning teams in each community to support, coordinate and convene a series of community cafés between January and June 2016. Parents, community members, families, children, service providers and concerned community members met in the cafés to share their thoughts, experiences and wisdom about how their communities could help strengthen and support families and children.

The community cafés required significant community engagement, thoughtful planning, leadership, and coordination from planning teams in each of the participating communities of Anchorage, Hooper Bay, Kotzebue, Sitka, Sutton and Wasilla. These teams met multiple times to plan for the event and provided time and resources to make them successful. Thank you to the following planning team members for your time, support, resources and energy!

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Introduction: Let's Talk about Safe Kids and Strong Families!

What is a community café?

A community café is an opportunity to convene meaningful conversations amongst parent and community members in partnership with interested community entities or organizations. Café conversations often spur dialogue and action, connect, and help develop and strengthen family and community relationships beyond the café. Community cafés take place in relaxed and familiar environments where participants sit around small tables of fewer than five people. Community cafés consist of rounds of conversation with two or more questions discussed in each round. The questions presented genuinely matter to the community and deep discussions regularly flow from the question prompts.¹

One or two people act as café hosts to set the tone and hold the space, keep the agenda moving, and facilitate the large group discussion and debriefing. One person at each table acts as a table host to help the small group conversations go smoothly by modeling openness, honesty, and self-reflection. Participants are encouraged to listen for patterns, share insights, and connect ideas, thoughts and conversations.²

Which communities hosted cafés and how did they get involved?

The Alaska Department of Health and Social Services provided this opportunity to interested communities in each region of the state. Current Office of Children's Services (OCS) in-home grantees, family support grantees, and community partners were initially contacted about this opportunity. Those who expressed interest were then contacted by Agnew::Beck to discuss further. If it was not the right time for a particular community, Agnew::Beck pursued other contacts to find a community who was interested and excited about hosting a community café. Ultimately, Anchorage, Hooper Bay, Kotzebue, Sitka, Sutton and Wasilla hosted community cafés.

Who participated and hosted the cafés?

Participants of the community cafés included a broad representation from each community, including interested community members and/or leaders, business leaders, educators, elected officials or staff, faith community members and/or leaders, foster parents/guardians, grandparents, military personnel, parents, other relatives, retired persons, service providers, tribal members and/or leaders, and youth.

Planning team members included parents and interested community members and/or leaders involved in a variety of settings including child welfare and social service agencies, early learning centers, schools, behavioral health providers, city and tribal leadership, family-related non-profits, child advocacy groups, community coalitions and initiatives, and community and tribal health entities.

1 Community Café. 2015. <http://thecommunitycafe.com/wp-content/uploads/QuickGuideEnglish.pdf>.

2 Ibid.

What is Strengthening Families and how did it inform the discussions at the cafés?

Strengthening Families is a research-informed approach that increases family strengths, enhances child development and reduces the likelihood of child abuse and neglect.³ It focuses on engaging families, programs and communities in building five protective factors: parental resilience, social connections, knowledge of parenting and child development, concrete supports in times of need, and social and emotional competence of children.⁴

- Parental resilience is managing stress and functioning well when faced with challenges, adversity and trauma.
- Social connections are positive relationships that provide emotional, informational, instrumental and spiritual support.
- Knowledge of parenting and child development is understanding child development and parenting strategies that support physical, cognitive, language, social and emotional development.
- Concrete support in times of need is access to concrete support and services that address a family's needs and help minimize stress caused by challenges.
- Social and emotional competence of children is family and child interactions that help children develop the ability to communicate clearly, recognize and regulate their emotions and establish and maintain relationships.⁵

Each café incorporated the Strengthening Families protective factors into the suggested discussion questions discussed in small groups and audience response questions.

What is audience response and how was it used in the cafés?

Audience response or live polling technology is a tool that Agnew::Beck uses often at community meetings. Participants vote anonymously using remote “clickers,” with the results instantly shown live on the screen. This allows for immediate discussion and review of community issues and ideas. Agnew::Beck has found this to be a particularly effective way of gathering and reviewing group feedback as a tool for facilitating in-depth discussion. Polling feedback provides an additional analytical tool for examining the results. This is especially helpful for collecting community feedback and potential ranking of specific priorities for each Strengthening Families Protective Factor and how participants felt their community was doing on each.

Each café incorporated audience response into the café format and questions were interspersed throughout the agenda to allow for a variety of methods of input. Each participant had the option to share feedback using the live polling technology. The Anchorage and Mat-Su planning teams decided to use the same or similar audience response questions in an online survey to get feedback from individuals unable to attend the in-person cafés. Results of both surveys were added into the results for the corresponding café.

³ Center for the Study of Social Policy. 2016. Strengthening Families: A Protective Factors Framework.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Center for the Study of Social Policy. 2016. Core Meanings of the Strengthening Families Protective Factors. <http://www.cssp.org/reform/strengtheningfamilies/2015/Core-Meanings-of-the-SF-Protective-Factors-2015.pdf>

Who helped facilitate the cafés?

Agnew::Beck's Managing Principal Thea Agnew Bemben helped facilitate the cafés. Thea has been doing this type of work in Alaska communities since 1996 and Agnew::Beck holds very strong values about the importance of real community dialogue and is deeply committed to this type of engagement. Thea is trained in the Socratic Seminar model of dialogue where topics are explored using a series of questions to help the group develop a deeper collective understanding of the issue. This structured dialogue has informed Thea's approach to facilitation of community dialogue since that time and assisted her in facilitating these community conversations.

Who will this report go to and how will they use it?

The information gathered from each of the cafés will be reported back to the communities who participated and to system leaders who will use this information in decision making. This includes Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS) leadership, program and grant managers, Office of Children's Services (OCS) administration, and the legislative liaison officer. The information will be used to inform decisions about allocation of prevention funding and to share the communities' voice with legislative and Department leaders. Feedback will be integrated with the Department's ongoing efforts to gather information from multiple groups to help guide systems improvements and target family strengthening services needed by parents and families.

What did we share and learn from the cafés?

Common themes from all cafés

At each café, participants were asked a series of polling questions to rank the priorities to help strengthen families in their community, using the five protective factors of the Strengthening Families framework (shown in *Italics* below). This list summarizes the **top two priorities for each of the five protective factors across all of the community cafés**; there was surprising uniformity in the top priorities across the various cafes.

- *Concrete supports in times of need:*
 - provide services locally
 - connect families with someone to help them access services.
- *Parental resilience:*
 - encourage workplaces and employers to be flexible and understanding
 - connect families with someone to help them access services.
- *Social connections:*
 - host community gatherings and events
 - share cultural traditions, language, stories and skills.
- *Knowledge of parenting and child development:*
 - hands-on, in-home coaching for new parents
 - engage elders and extended family to support new parents.
- *Social and emotional competence of children:*
 - help parents tend to their own personal and emotional needs
 - help parents provide an environment for their children that is nurturing and loving.

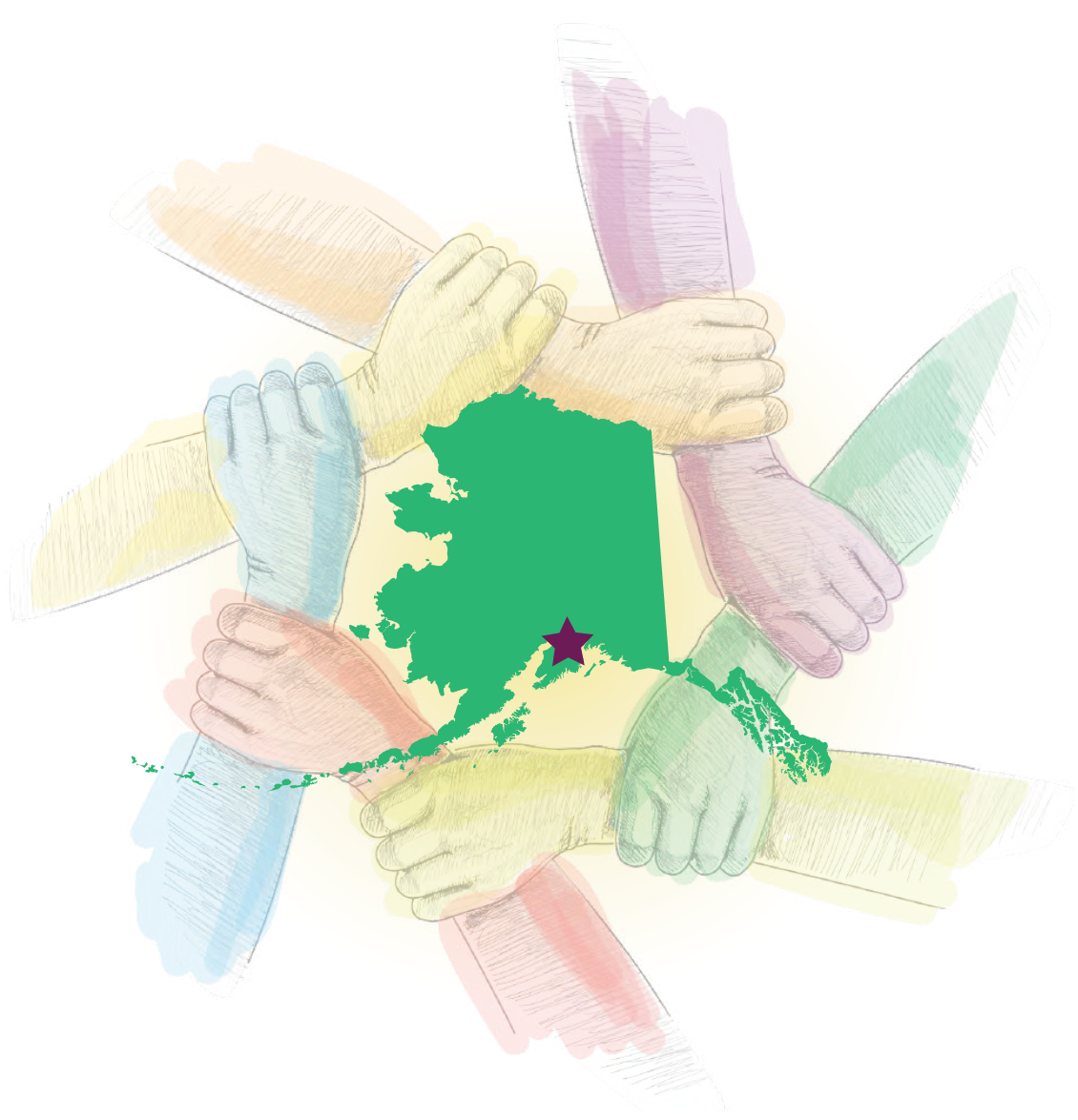
Other themes to note:

- Café participants in smaller, more rural communities reported that families have strong social supports through extended family and both spiritual and cultural connections. More people in the community take part in raising children and sharing housing and financial resources. People shared that this can also create stress due to crowded housing, lack of water and sanitation and caring for many children in one home, often by a grandparent. In more urban communities, participants shared that it can be difficult to connect with neighbors and other families and is difficult to find help with childcare and other basic needs. This can be compounded by lack of transportation and the sense that neighborhoods are not safe or friendly.
- In all of the cafés, participants expressed the need for service providers and the children and families they serve to build trust, form alliances and bridge cultural and other divides. This was expressed through concerns from service providers about how to engage families in services and supports, how

to share information about resources that exist; and from families about the lack of support and feeling that the service provider was working against them and not towards a common aim. Participants identified that many free or sliding scale services exist and are helpful but that people don't know about them or how to connect with them.

- Families expressed concern, embarrassment and fear about asking for help in times of need and concern about the possible negative consequences from asking questions and sharing stories about the challenges within their families. Participants expressed that this fear is compounded by the difficulty associated with getting help: complicated applications, having to tell their story multiple times; one person expressed that it feels like the systems that are supposed to help instead “feel like they are designed to put you behind.”
- Participants identified the need to increase access to mental health services for parents, particularly for parents with FASD and other cognitive deficits.
- Participants shared that pride prevents some parents from asking for help from others and others feel like they do not deserve help, or are embarrassed they need it. In some of the cafés, participants shared that the cultural belief in some parts of Alaska that you should “pull yourself up by your bootstraps” makes families reluctant to ask for help.
- To address these concerns, participants consistently prioritized connecting families with a helpful, trusting person who can help families advocate, navigate and connect to needed resources. While most participants agreed there were resources available in their communities, often families and service providers were not aware of available services. A peer helper or family navigator are necessary to create bridges and connect families with resources.
- Financial barriers for families are significant: it is difficult to secure employment that can support families, to find affordable childcare to allow parents to work and public assistance is difficult to apply for and navigate.
- Participants prioritized the need for parents and families to meet their basic needs, especially through finding employment that can support their families, and quality childcare to allow parents to work. In all of the cafés, participants prioritized “supportive employers who provide flexible workplaces that are supportive of parents’ needs to take care of children” when asked how communities could best support families.
- Participants shared their approaches to disciplining children by treating them with respect and not teaching them to fear you but to respect you; to find ways to help children safely test and learn boundaries.
- Participants shared the many ways that they give and receive support from neighbors and friends to strengthen their families:
 - providing childcare and meals
 - sharing skills and helping with projects
 - watching out for each others’ property and taking care of pets
 - helping with transportation, by bringing children to school and events
 - going to fish camp together
 - providing emotional and physical support, building a sense of belonging for parents and children, feeling accepted and included, loved and appreciated
 - giving to others as volunteers
 - sharing fun, simple events like game nights
 - hosting tribal gatherings and potlatches

- laughing together
- gardening
- baking something and taking it to a new neighbor
- participating in community schools, classes, activities and crafts
- Participants shared the priority of helping parents take care of themselves so that they can be better parents to their children. Parents shared many ways that they do this by:
 - taking the weekend off
 - deep breathing
 - acupuncture
 - exercise
 - “When I get overwhelmed I sit back and reflect, prioritize, breathe”
 - “I allow myself to feel the emotions but express them in a healthy way”
 - ask for help
 - go to therapy
 - setting one’s own boundaries and respecting them
 - making time just to be together with family
 - being out in nature
 - connecting with others
 - breastfeeding support groups
 - learning to say no when you are over-committed to conserve time for self and family, “Learning that it’s ok to take my cape off.”
- When asked about negative habits in their communities, participants identified:
 - too much TV and screen time
 - partying and staying up too late
 - substance abuse
 - sexual assault
 - lack of positive social support for men
 - crime
 - racism
 - lack of trust
 - shame, fear and isolation
 - ignorance and lack of knowledge or awareness
- Participants who are teens and young parents described that they often feel alone and isolated and “scared” about raising children, especially alone; but sometimes “parenting alone is easier than fighting [with the other parent].”
- Parents who participated in the cafés seek better access to political power so they can be more involved in improving the system and making it more helpful and responsive. This is hampered by language and cultural differences, which can limit the power that some parents have to advocate for themselves and their families. Some parents have learned how to contact legislators and actively advocate for themselves and their children, while others seek training and support to learn how to do this.



Anchorage



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Highlights from the cafés

The Anchorage planning team decided to host two cafés: one during the lunch hour that focused on providers and another in the evening that focused on families.

Anchorage: Family-focused

Who hosted and who participated?

Alaska Youth and Family Network (AYFN) and the Child and Family Services Program of Cook Inlet Tribal Council (CITC) hosted the Anchorage family-focused café. AYFN is a non-profit organization offering a peer-run, peer-delivered service creating effective and inclusive behavioral health treatment systems for Alaska's children, youth and families.⁶ Through individual support groups, peer navigation, and parent coaching, AYFN provides support to help families with challenges of parenting



and understanding the education and behavioral health systems.⁷ CITC is a tribal non-profit organization helping Alaska Native and American Indian people in the Cook Inlet Region of Southcentral Alaska reach their full potential.⁸ The Child and Family Services Program within CITC helps families recover from and/or prevent abuse, neglect and domestic violence through case management, teaching and mentoring services, and by establishing connections with related services and resources within the community.⁹ Over 50 people participated in this café from Anchorage, Eagle River and Wasilla and mainly included community members and/or leaders who identified themselves as parents, other relatives, and service providers.

Summary of what was shared

- More peer-to-peer services are needed. Participants placed an importance on intensive one-on-one and individualized support. Navigators are helpful and family wellness coaches could be a support for struggling families.
- Parenting support groups are needed for parents with special needs children.
- Education and skills courses on parenting and child development are needed for youth and young adults. Other skills training like CPR/first aid, babysitting, vocational training is also needed.
- Participants expressed a need for more opportunities for youth, like free activities and free or low-cost community events that help parents connect and provide positive activities for children.

⁶ Alaska Youth and Family Network. 2013. Who We Are. http://www.ayfn.org/wp/?page_id=6

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Cook Inlet Tribal Council. 2016. About CITC. <http://citci.org/about/>

⁹ Cook Inlet Tribal Council. 2016. Child and Family Services. <http://citci.org/child-family/>

- Systems are needed to support families to make it easier to receive and access services. Many systems are not helpful and instead harmful due to difficulty applying (long waiting lists, intake, application process), changes in eligibility, separation of services that are confusing and difficult to manage, broken promises, promised services that never materialize. The system feels too big to help and families have to learn how to “game” the system before it can work for them.
- Participants expressed that some case workers do not feel like a partner, as they are not accessible and difficult to meet requirements.
- Families need to link together and network to make the system stronger; strength in numbers, especially in terms of advocacy. Importance of advocating to have a voice with legislators and help people do this; there are lots of barriers to navigate with policymakers; families have limited access to power; need better communication with local leaders as there is a lack of voice in system change.
- The expense of childcare is overwhelming; there is a lack of quality, accessible childcare to allow parents to connect with others. Families need access to the social, educational and vocational opportunities that are linked to quality childcare.
- Participants discussed the lack of communication with neighbors and having difficulty creating community and finding connections/friends. Safety and crime is a concern therefore safer neighborhoods are needed for our children.
- “It’s difficult to share my experiences and face judgements.”
- Participants stated that it is difficult getting from place to place for services; basic needs are difficult to get met. Participants talked about feeling unsafe on public transit, having unreliable transportation, experiencing long routes and slow and public transportation is not offered late enough to help with night shift work.
- Social supports exist but formal, service-oriented supports are overwhelming and hard to access.
- Participants expressed feeling more comfortable going to family, friends, co-workers, other community networks before going to municipality, state or federal programs for help and support. Participants stated that their last resort is accessing community resources.
- More basic needs resources are needed in the community to support families such as coins for laundry. “Kids get made fun of if they come to school with dirty clothes and don’t smell clean.”

“Being a parent is part natural and part learned. Everybody needs help.”
 - Community café participant

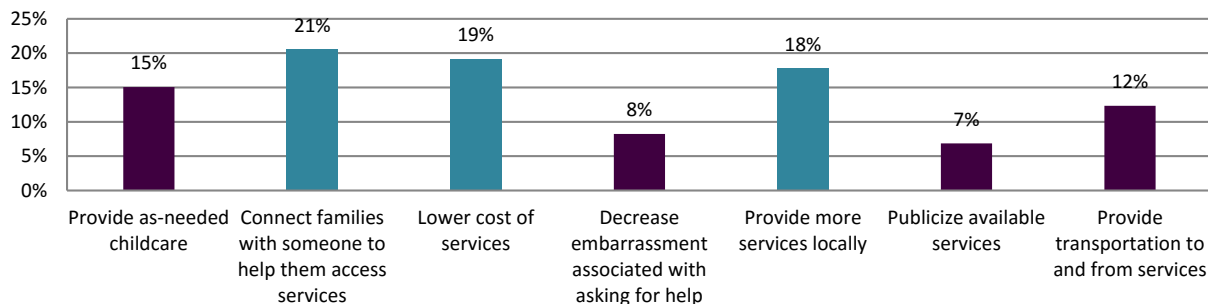


Highlights from audience polling responses

Anchorage family-focused café participants ranked their community as doing a fair job of helping families find concrete supports in times of need and helping parents learn about parenting and child development. Café participants ranked their community as doing a fair to poor job of helping parents remain stable, calm and nurturing during challenging times. Café participants ranked their community as doing a poor job of helping families strengthen relationships with family and community and helping families nurture children’s social and emotional skills. The following figures show how Anchorage family-focused café participants ranked how their community could help parents with the five protective factors.

Figure 1 shows the top ranks for Anchorage family-focused participants on how they think the community could help parents find concrete supports in times of need. In ranking order they are as follows: connect families with someone to help them access services, lower cost of services, and provide more services locally.

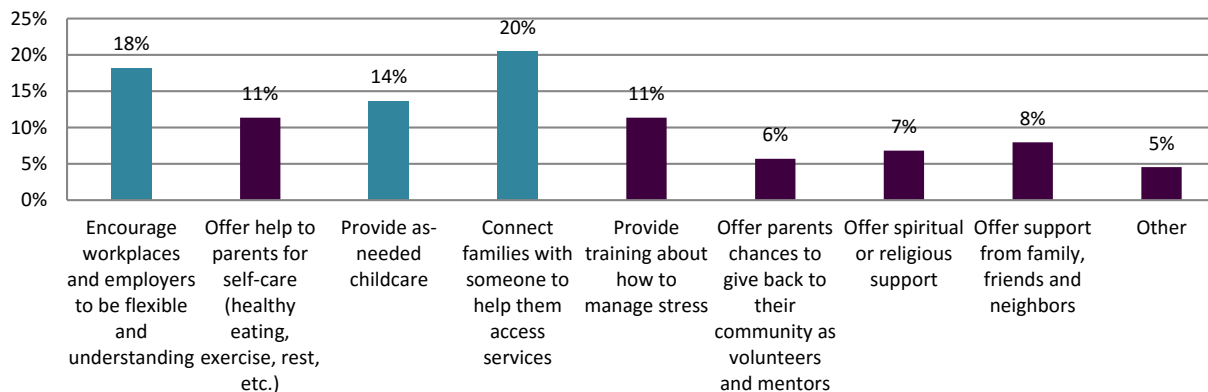
Figure 1: How can you and your community help families find concrete supports in times of need?



Source: Anchorage Family-focused Community Café Audience Response Results.

Figure 2 shows the top ranks for Anchorage family-focused participants on how they think the community could help parents remain stable, calm and nurturing during challenging times. In ranking order they are as follows: connect families with someone to help them access services, encourage workplaces and employers to be flexible and understanding, and provide as-needed childcare. Those who chose the ‘other’ option added parent education and skill building.

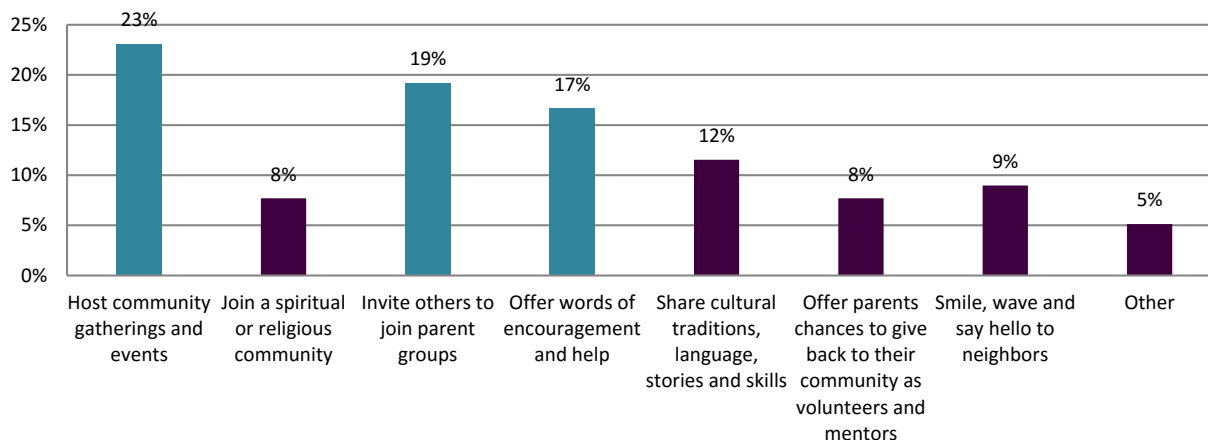
Figure 2: How can you and your community help parents remain stable, calm and nurturing during challenging times?



Source: Anchorage Family-focused Community Café Audience Response Results.

Figure 3 shows the top ranks for Anchorage family-focused participants on how they think the community could help families strengthen relationships with family and the community. In ranking order they are as follows: host community gatherings and events; invite others to join parent groups; and offer words of encouragement and help.

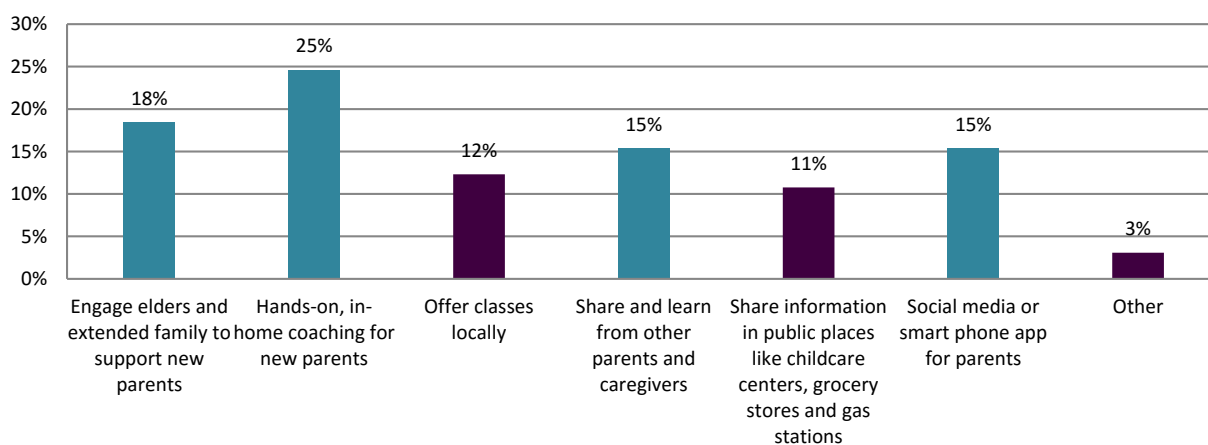
Figure 3: How can you and your community help families strengthen relationships with family and the community?



Source: Anchorage Family-focused Community Café Audience Response Results.

Figure 4 shows the top ranks for Anchorage family-focused participants on how they think the community could help parents learn about parenting and child development. In ranking order they are as follows: hands-on, in-home coaching for new parents; engage elders and extended family to support new parents; share and learn from other parents and caregivers; and social media or smart phone app for parents.

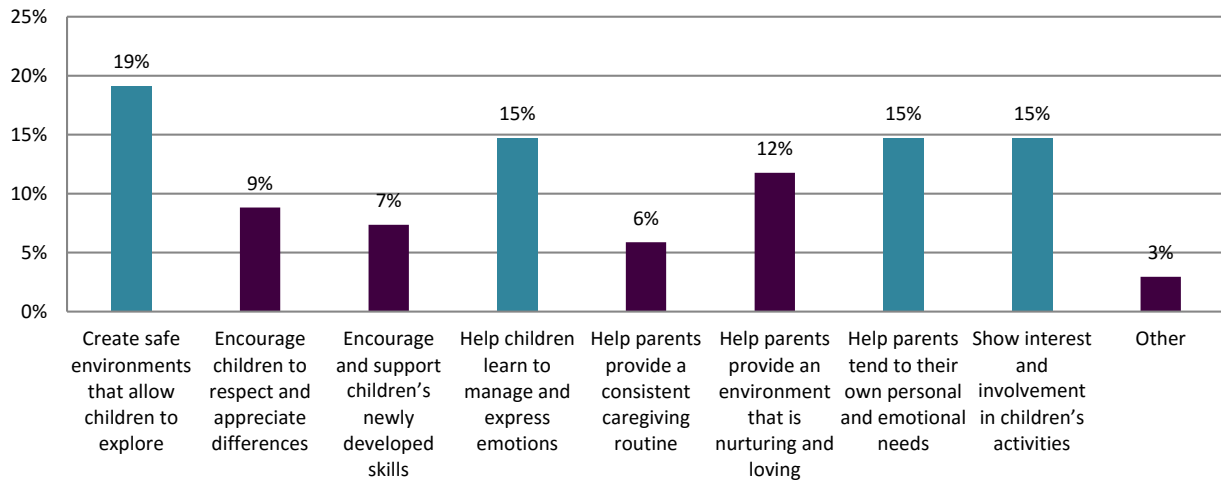
Figure 4: How can you and your community help parents learn about parenting and child development?



Source: Anchorage Family-focused Community Café Audience Response Results.

Figure 5 shows the top ranks for Anchorage family-focused participants on how they think the community could help parents nurture children’s social and emotional skills. In ranking order they are as follows: create safe environments that allow children to explore; help children learn to manage and express emotions; help parents tend to their own personal and emotional needs; and show interest and involvement in children’s activities.

Figure 5: How can you and your community help parents nurture children’s social and emotional skills?



Source: Anchorage Family-focused Community Café Audience Response Results.

Anchorage: Provider-focused

Who hosted and who participated?

The Child Development Division of Rural Alaska Community Action Program, Inc. (RurAL CAP) hosted the Anchorage provider-focused café. RurAL CAP is a private statewide, non-profit organization working to improve the quality of life for low-income Alaskans.¹⁰ The Child Development Division provides services to prenatal women, children and families in 28 communities across Alaska.¹¹ Programs offered by this Division include Head Start, Early Head



¹⁰ RurAL CAP. About Us. <https://ruralcap.com/>

¹¹ RurAL CAP. Early Childhood Education. <https://ruralcap.com/early-childhood-education/>

Start, Parents as Teachers, and an early child care facility in Anchorage.¹² Over 30 people participated in this café from Anchorage and Eagle River and mainly included community members and/or leaders who identified themselves as parents, service providers, and educators.

Summary of what was shared

- For some families, Anchorage is a very transient community where individuals experience a lack of connection with neighbors/community, isolation, and have difficulty engaging. Winter months can also create isolation. When families experience a crisis, there is nowhere safe for them to turn.
- Need more welcoming communities especially when a new parent or family moves in to a community or neighborhood; need more safe places to talk about the stresses of parenting.
- Raising a family appears to be something families do on their own and is not a collective effort. The “it takes a village” mentality is no longer. This can be a shock for families who move to Anchorage from smaller, more rural communities where social supports are stronger.
- Fear of reaching out to Office of Children’s Services (OCS) if you need help, support, or guidance. Draws the wrong kind of attention, social stigma, and repercussions.
- The high cost of living contributes to poor health, functioning and stress. High costs for housing and food combined with low wages, often force parents to work multiple jobs to meet basic needs, homelessness and/or unstable housing situations, especially for young parents. The lack of affordable childcare compounds this situation. Employers need to be aware of the childcare needs of their employees and should be institutionalized for all employers, not only mothers but fathers as well.
- Housing is needed in Anchorage, especially safe housing for teen parents.
- For some families, the processes for being able to meet basic needs can be overwhelming and is unclear how to access needed services. There are service gaps, long waiting lists, and not enough services or providers for families needing help, especially Medicaid recipients.
- The idea of creating a community calendar came up to publicize community events and activities.
- There is a need for collaboration among service providers to be able to consolidate processes so not all organizations are providing the same services. It was suggested that events like Project Homeless Connect happen more frequently to bring providers serving families together to allow more families to learn about and access available services.



¹² RurAL CAP. Early Childhood Education. <https://ruralcap.com/early-childhood-education/>

Highlights from audience polling responses

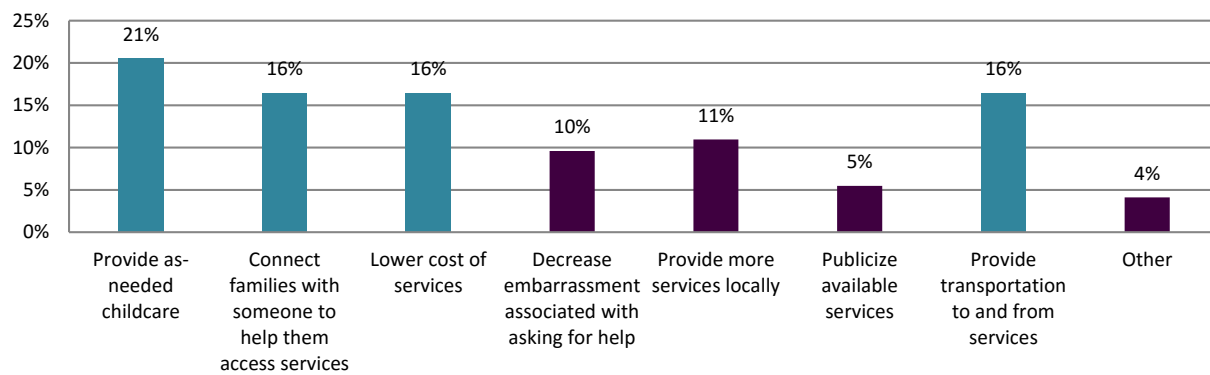
Anchorage provider-focused café participants ranked their community as doing a fair job of helping families find concrete supports in times of need and helping families strengthen relationships with family and community. Anchorage provider-focused café participants ranked their community as doing a poor job of helping parents remain stable, calm and nurturing during challenging times; helping parents learn about parenting and child development; and helping parents nurture children’s social and emotional skills. The following figures show how Anchorage provider-focused café participants ranked how their community could help parents with the five protective factors.

“It drains my energy when my children have needs I’m overwhelmed with.”

- Community café participant

Figure 6 shows the top ranks for Anchorage provider-focused participants on how they think the community could help parents find concrete supports in times of need. In ranking order they are as follows: provide as-needed childcare, connect families with someone to help them access services, lower cost of services, and provide transportation to and from services.

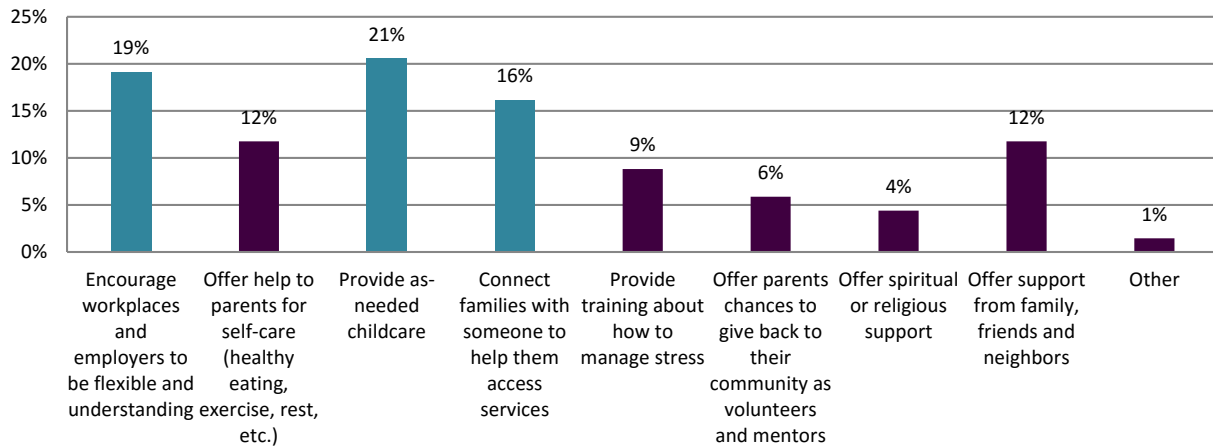
Figure 6: How can you and your community help families find concrete supports in times of need?



Source: Anchorage Provider-focused Community Café Audience Response and Online Survey Results.

Figure 7 shows the top rankings for Anchorage provider-focused participants on how they think the community could help parents remain stable, calm and nurturing during challenging times. In ranking order they are as follows: provide as-needed childcare, encourage workplaces and employers to be flexible and understanding, and connect families with someone to help them access services.

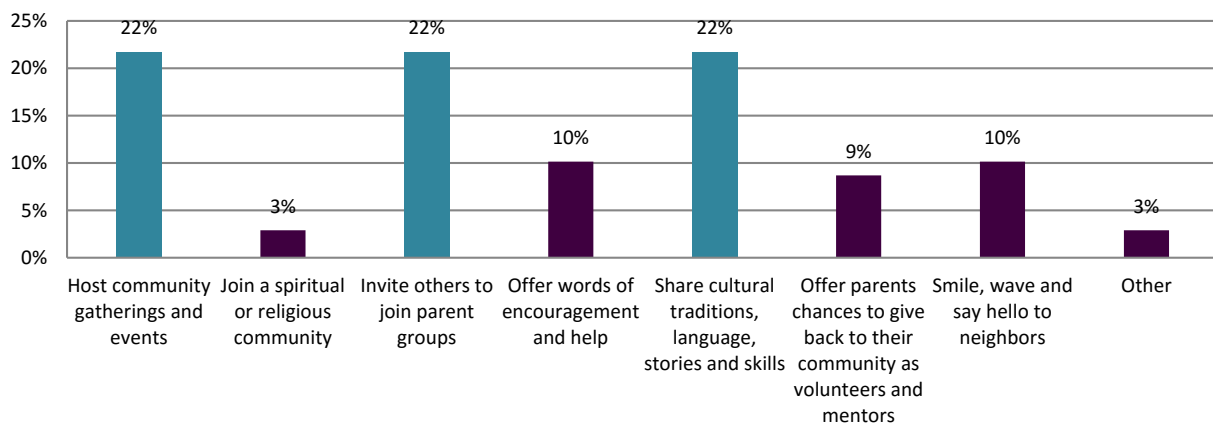
Figure 7: How can you and your community help parents remain stable, calm and nurturing during challenging times?



Source: Anchorage Provider-focused Community Café Audience Response and Online Survey Results.

Figure 8 shows the top ranks for Anchorage provider-focused participants on how they think the community could help families strengthen relationships with family and the community. In ranking order they are as follows: host community gatherings and events; invite others to join parent groups; and share cultural traditions, language, stories and skills.

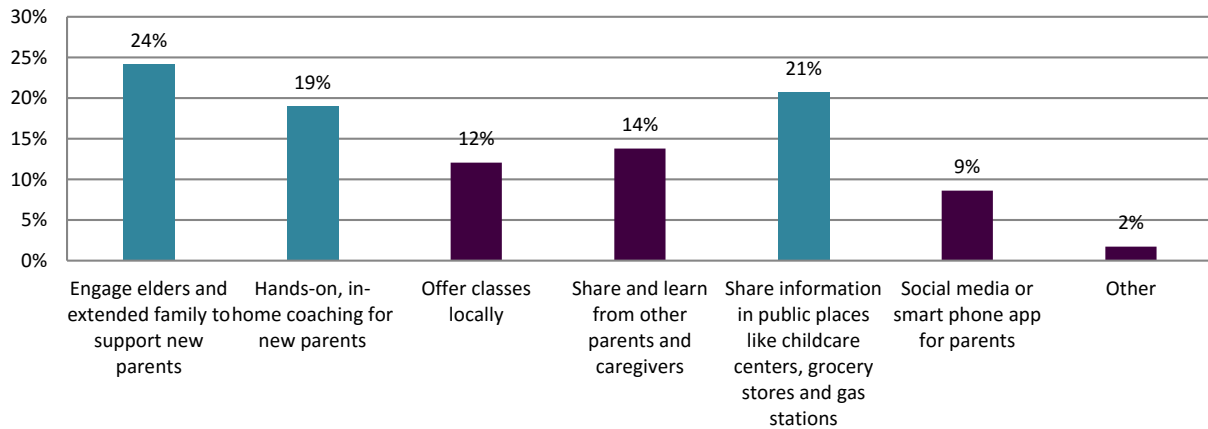
Figure 8: How can you and your community help families strengthen relationships with family and the community?



Source: Anchorage Provider-focused Community Café Audience Response and Online Survey Results.

Figure 9 shows the top ranks for Anchorage provider-focused participants on how they think the community could help parents learn about parenting and child development. In ranking order they are as follows: engage elders and extended family to support new parents; share information in public places like childcare centers, grocery stores and gas stations; and hands-on, in-home coaching for new parents.

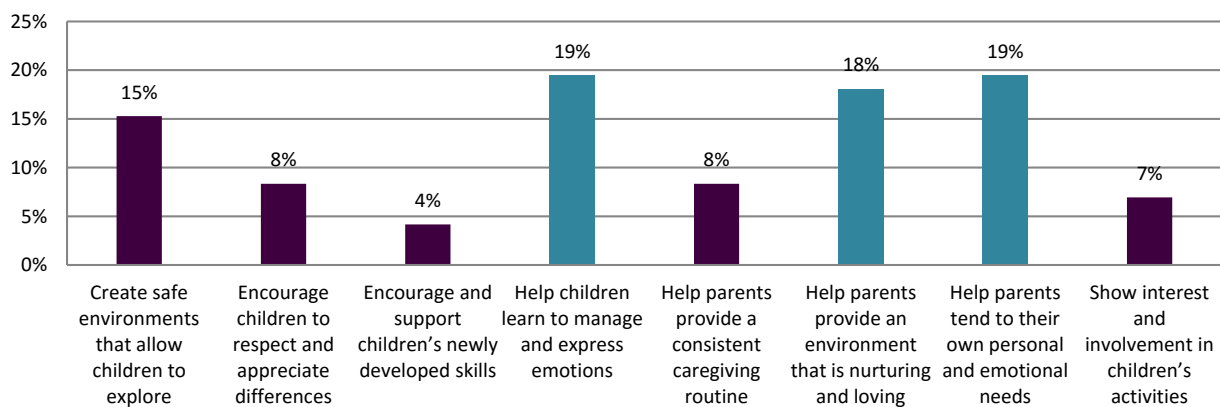
Figure 9: How can you and your community help parents learn about parenting and child development?



Source: Anchorage Provider-focused Community Café Audience Response and Online Survey Results.

Figure 10 shows the top ranks for Anchorage provider-focused participants on how they think the community could help parents nurture children’s social and emotional skills. In ranking order they are as follows: help children learn to manage and express emotions; help parents tend to their own personal and emotional needs; and help parents provide an environment that is nurturing and loving.

Figure 10: How can you and your community help parents nurture children’s social and emotional skills?



Source: Anchorage Provider-focused Community Café Audience Response and Online Survey Results.

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Hooper Bay



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Hooper Bay

Who hosted and who participated?

The Hooper Bay community café was a community-wide effort hosted by the following organizations: City of Hooper Bay, Hooper Bay School, Native Village of Hooper Bay, and Sea Lion Corporation. Over 100 people participated in this café from Hooper Bay and mainly included community members and/or leaders who identified themselves as parents, grandparents, youth, and educators.



Summary of what was shared

- Participants emphasized the importance of helping families meet their basic needs such as adequate housing that is not overcrowded, and access to clean water and sanitation. Teachers talked about children coming to school with rashes and sores on their faces and hands that are caused by poor sanitation. Families talked about the difficulty of keeping clothes and bedding clean and the frequent sickness that children suffer from due to poor sanitation. This is a very strong priority of the Hooper Bay community, to improve housing and sanitation for all families and households.
- Family, spirituality, culture, traditions and language are very important. It is important to teach the values, culture and language of Hooper Bay to younger generations to continue traditions. There is a difference between other Yukon-Kuskokwim cultures and the Hooper Bay culture.
 - Elders to help teach parents and younger children about culture and traditions to pass on what they have learned; more involvement with youth is needed.
 - Yupik culture, language, cultural practices are strong; experience racial prejudice when we go to Anchorage, but not in Hooper Bay.
 - Younger generation is more western than Yupik. These are the ones that need help.
- Culture and tradition, along with meeting as a community, are the greatest supports.
- There is a lot of social support and the perception of community is very positive; meeting basic needs is the priority, especially the health issues caused by lack of basic needs such as access to sanitation and adequate housing (overcrowding).
- Participants expressed the need to work together as a community and be willing to talk about the good and the bad. Offering whole community events, such as dancing, teaching traditional values, rituals, and potlucks are seen as ways to strengthen the community.
- Parents are competing with technology.

- Boredom in villages, lack of work, isolation and needing more to do; recreational facilities needed like a ball park, swimming pool, recreation center, movie theatre, pool hall, and restaurants. Keeping the mind busy takes the focus off stress. Some participants stated they deal with stress by helping others.
- If you grow up dealing with things, you can break the cycle and the cycle doesn't have to continue.
- Important to talk to children at home and always give children positive input. Important to teach love and forgiveness to our children.
- School and teachers and the general educational environment are good supports though counselors are needed. Bullying is an issue.
- Faith communities are good for connecting families. Participants shared that spiritual support, “seeking God’s help”, prayer, and staying connected to the earth are positive supports.

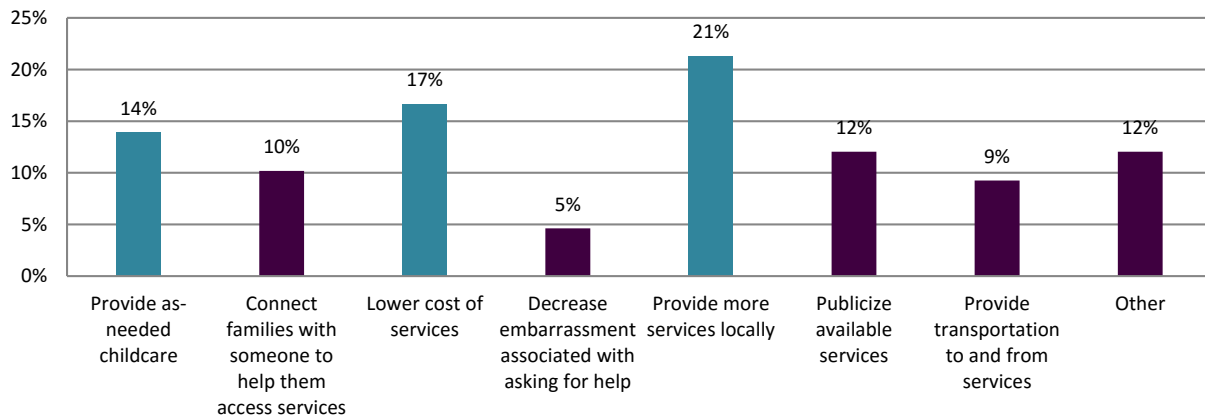
Highlights from audience polling responses

Hooper Bay café participants ranked their community as doing a good job of helping families strengthen relationships with family and community and a good to fair job helping families find concrete supports in times of need and helping parents remain stable, calm and nurturing during challenging times. The following figures show how Hooper Bay café participants ranked how their community could help parents with three protective factors. This café ran over the length of time provided for this café, therefore we were unable to utilize the live polling technology on the last two protective factor questions. The last figure in this series shows the top priorities Hooper Bay participants ranked as issues they want their community to act on over the next year to support families.



Figure 11 shows the top ranks for Hooper Bay participants on how they think the community could help parents find concrete supports in times of need. In ranking order they are as follows: provide more service locally; lower cost of services; and provide as-needed childcare.

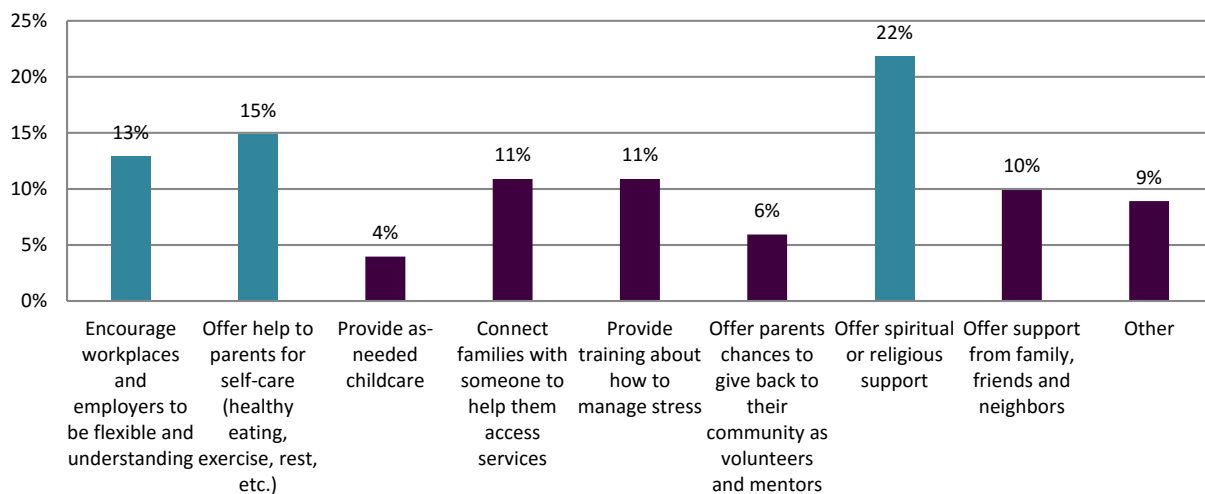
Figure 11: How can you and your community help families find concrete supports in times of need?



Source: Hooper Bay Community Café Audience Response Results.

Figure 12 shows the top ranks for Hooper Bay participants on how they think the community could help parents remain stable, calm and nurturing during challenging times. In ranking order they are as follows: offer spiritual or religious support; offer help to parents for self-care (healthy eating, exercise rest, etc.); and encourage workplaces and employers to be flexible and understanding.

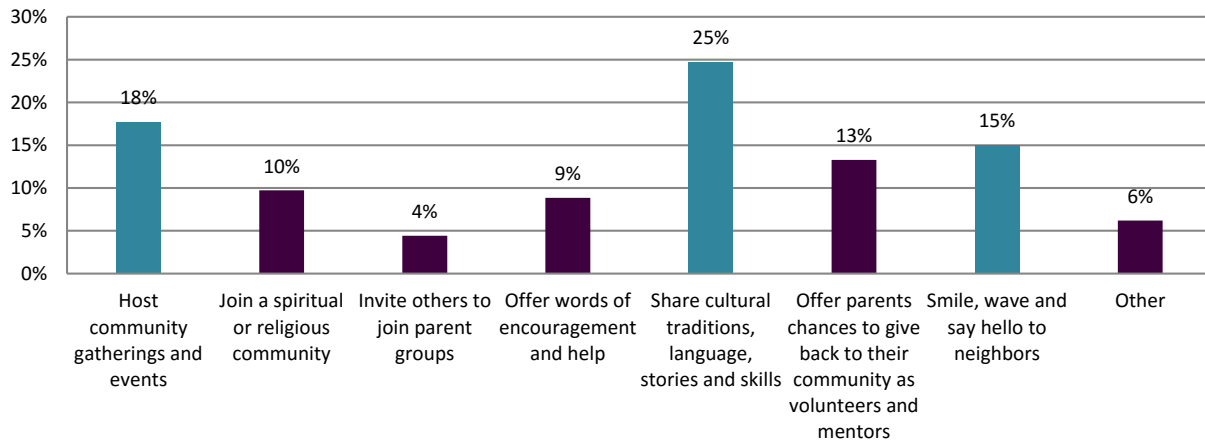
Figure 12: How can you and your community help parents remain stable, calm and nurturing during challenging times?



Source: Hooper Bay Community Café Audience Response Results.

Figure 13 shows the top ranks for Hooper Bay participants on how they think the community could help families strengthen relationships with family and the community. In ranking order they are as follows: share cultural traditions, language, stories and skills; host community gatherings and events; and smile, wave and say hello to neighbors.

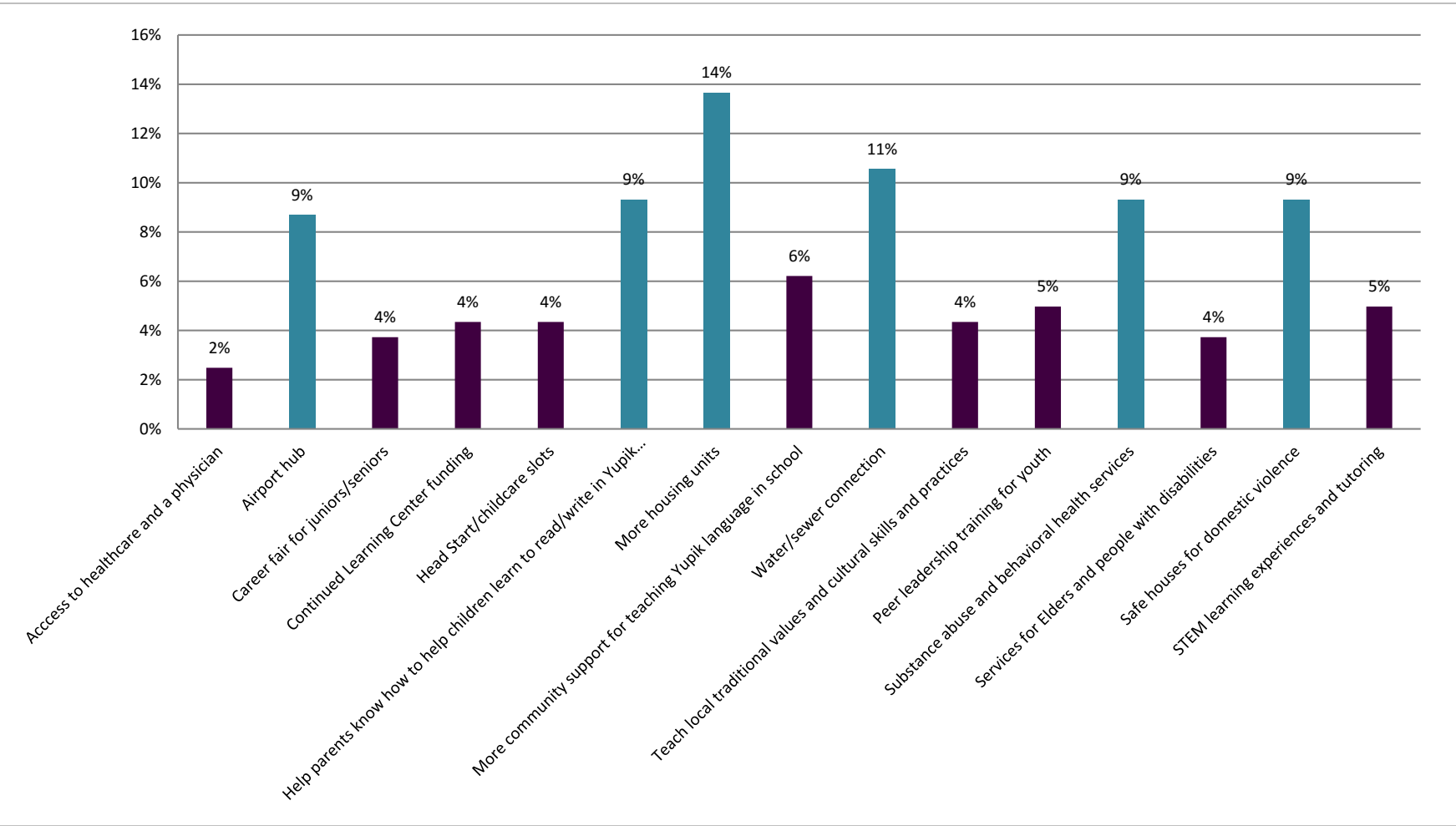
Figure 13: How can you and your community help families strengthen relationships with family and the community?



Source: Hooper Bay Community Café Audience Response Results.

Figure 14 shows the top identified priorities Hooper Bay participants ranked as issues they want their community to act on over the next year to support families. In ranking order they are as follows: more housing units; water/sewer connection; airport hub; help parents know how to help children learn to read/write in Yupik and English; substance abuse and behavioral health services; and safe houses for domestic violence.

Figure 14: What priorities do you want our community to act on over the next year?



Source: Hooper Bay Community Café Audience Response Results.

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Kotzebue



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Kotzebue

Who hosted and who participated?

The Social Services arm of Maniilaq Association hosted the Kotzebue café. Maniilaq Association is a non-profit corporation providing health, tribal and social services to residents of Northwest Alaska.¹³ The Social Services arm includes behavioral health services, the Putyuk Children’s Home, and senior and disability services.¹⁴ Over 40 people participated in this café from Kotzebue and Norvik and mainly included community members and/or leaders who identified themselves as parents, grandparents, service providers, and faith community members and/or leaders.



Summary of what was shared

- It is common for grandparents to raise young children and for extended family members to be adopting children. Grandparents and other family members provide stability and assist with basic needs like childcare, so parents can go to work. Without childcare, many parents do not have the ability to work. Strong family connections provide support to the whole family group. Grandparents are the main influence on parenting in Kotzebue and many people were/are raised by grandparents.
- There is a challenge between the different generations as so many electronics are competing for attention. Before community members used to play outdoors, now children would rather watch TV. Children are being raised by grandparents and elders do not have ability to monitor the internet or electronics. Grandparents want kids to have the best things, so it’s a balance between spoiling and depriving.
- No preventative support systems are in place. Wrap-around services needed. The community does a good job of coming to support families in crisis, but not to prevent crisis. Helping others and offering support helps to decrease stress. The community really gets together to help each other when bad things happen.
- Young parents do not have the skills to parent; therefore there is a need for more parenting and child development education.

“It’s good to know others have been there before, so you know you’re not alone.”

- Community café participant

13 Maniilaq Association. About Us. <http://www.maniilaq.org/about-us/>

14 Maniilaq Association. Social Services. <http://www.maniilaq.org/social-services/>

- School is very important. Children and youth do well at school in Kotzebue but when they go to Anchorage they learn they are behind.
- There is a shortage of housing, especially family housing in Kotzebue.
- Alcoholism, drugs, incarceration and bullying are issues in the community.
- Family, friends, and prayer are big supports.
- Maniilaq will be starting a pilot project in Kotzebue after school ends to reach families who are at-risk and engage them constructively before they are involved in the system. Maniilaq will offer classes in the community about healthy parenting and will work with parents to identify supports.

Highlights from audience polling responses

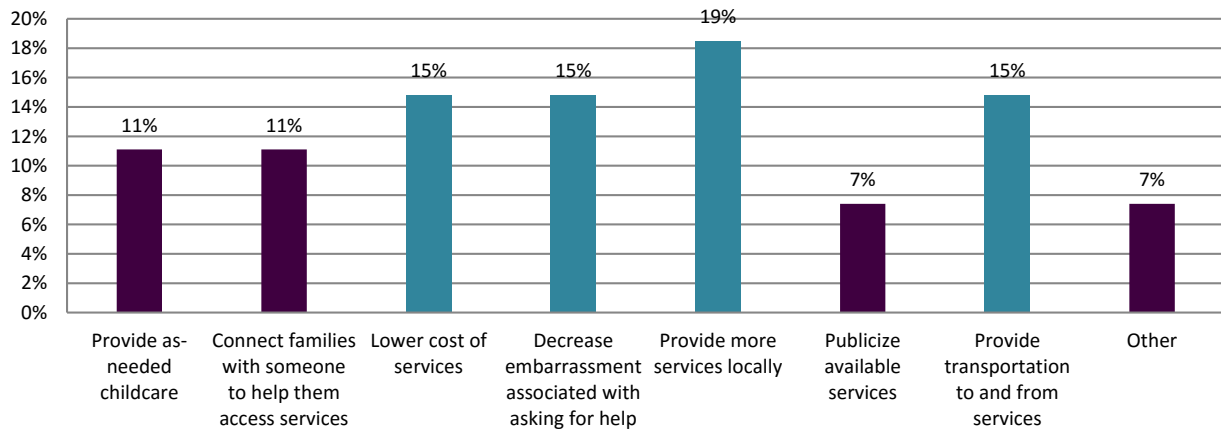
Kotzebue café participants ranked their community as doing a good job of helping families find concrete supports in times of need; helping parents remain stable, calm and nurturing during challenging times; and helping families strengthen relationships with family and community. Café participants ranked their community as doing a good to fair job of helping parents learn about parenting and child development and a fair job of



helping parents nurture children’s social and emotional skills. The following figures show how Kotzebue café participants ranked how their community could help parents with the five protective factors. The last figure in this series shows the top priorities Kotzebue participants ranked as issues they want their community to act on over the next year to support families.

Figure 15 shows the top ranks for Kotzebue participants on how they think the community could help parents find concrete supports in times of need. In ranking order they are as follows: provide more services locally, lower cost of services, decrease embarrassment associated with asking for help, and provide transportation to and from services.

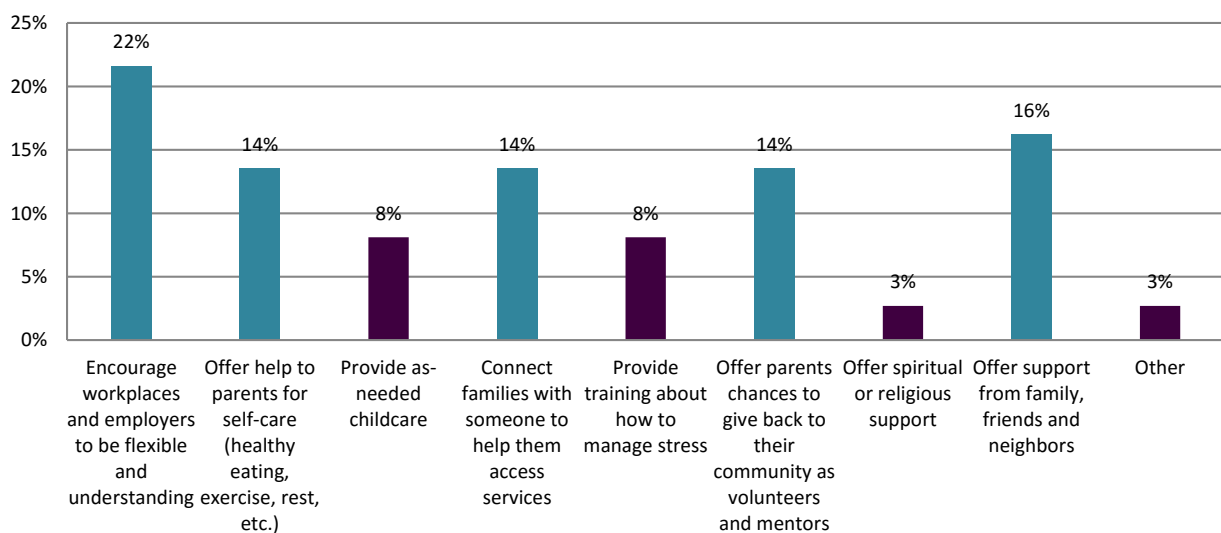
Figure 15: How can you and your community help families find concrete supports in times of need?



Source: Kotzebue Community Café Audience Response Results.

Figure 16 shows the top ranks for Kotzebue participants on how they think the community could help parents remain stable, calm and nurturing during challenging times. In ranking order they are as follows: encourage workplaces and employers to be flexible and understanding; offer support from family, friends and neighbors; offer help to parents for self-care (healthy eating, exercise, rest, etc.); connect families with someone to help them access services; and offer parents chances to give back to their community as volunteers and mentors.

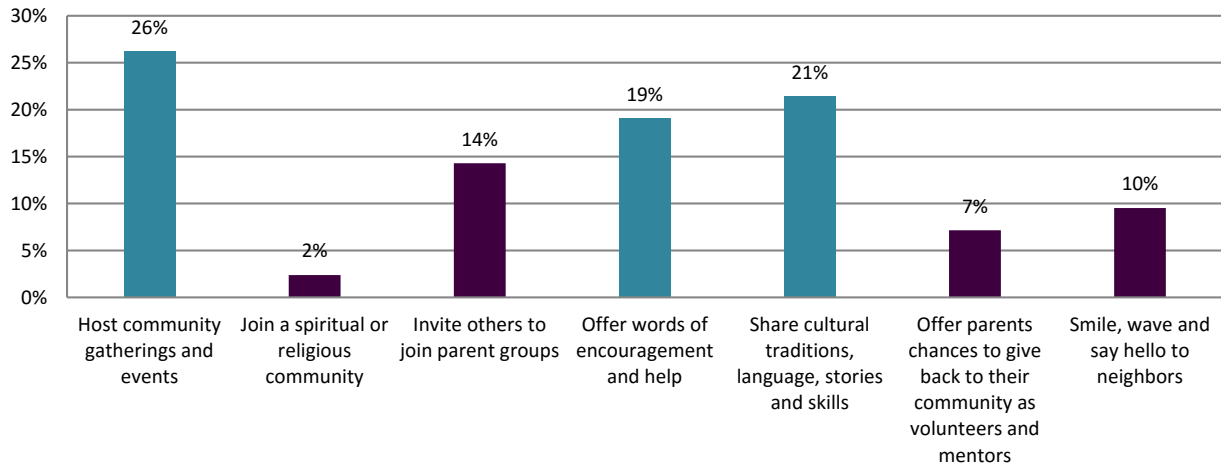
Figure 16: How can you and your community help parents remain stable, calm and nurturing during challenging times?



Source: Kotzebue Community Café Audience Response Results.

Figure 17 shows the top ranks for Kotzebue participants on how they think the community could help families strengthen relationships with family and the community. In ranking order they are as follows: host community gatherings and events; share cultural traditions, language, stories and skills; and offer words of encouragement and help.

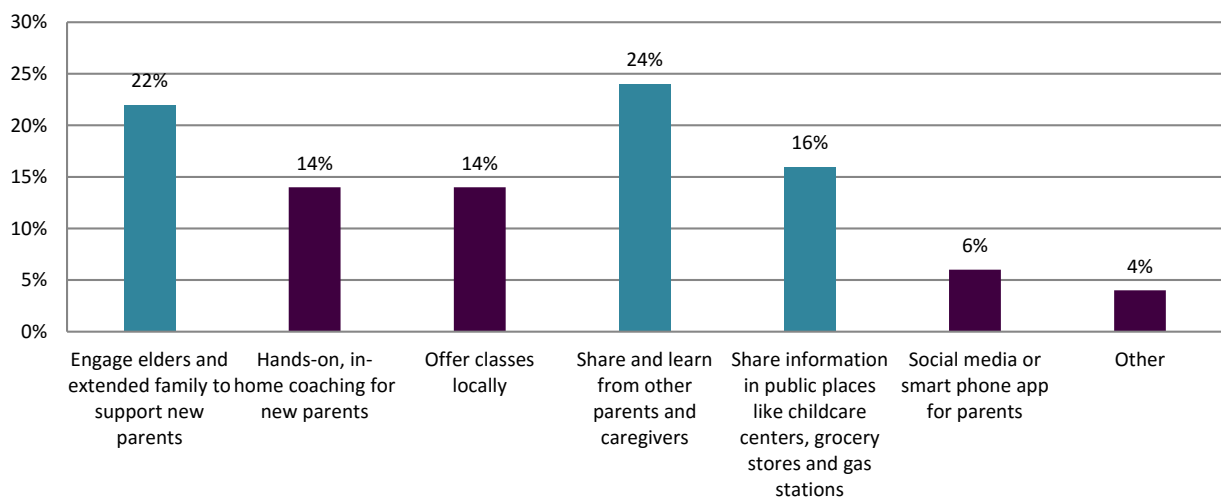
Figure 17: How can you and your community help families strengthen relationships with family and the community?



Source: Kotzebue Community Café Audience Response Results.

Figure 18 shows the top ranks for Kotzebue participants on how they think the community could help parents learn about parenting and child development. In ranking order they are as follows: share and learn from other parents and caregivers; engage elders and extended family to support new parents; and share information in public places like childcare centers, grocery stores and gas stations.

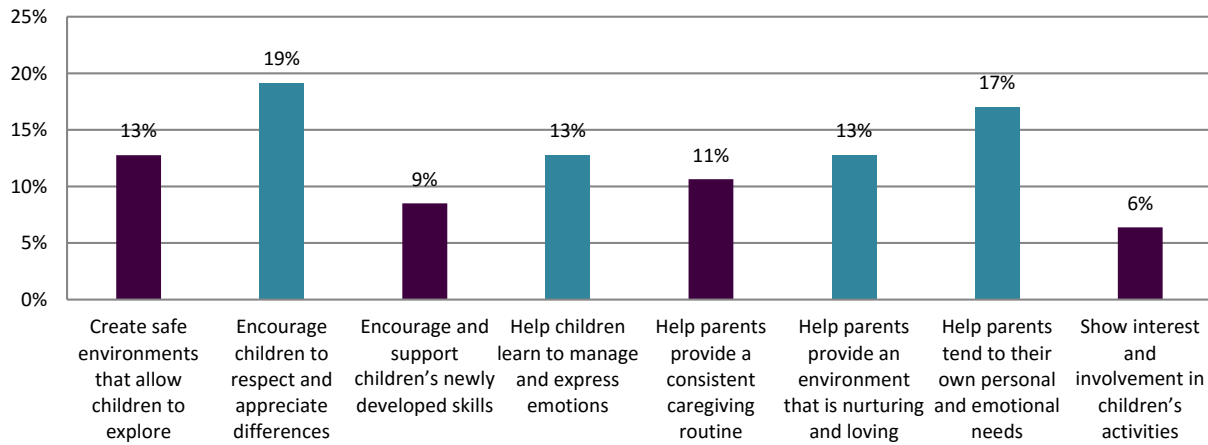
Figure 18: How can you and your community help parents learn about parenting and child development?



Source: Kotzebue Community Café Audience Response Results.

Figure 19 shows the top ranks for Kotzebue participants on how they think the community could help parents nurture children’s social and emotional skills. In ranking order they are as follows: encourage children to respect and appreciate differences; help parents tend to their own personal and emotional needs; help children learn to manage and express emotions; and help parents provide an environment that is nurturing and loving.

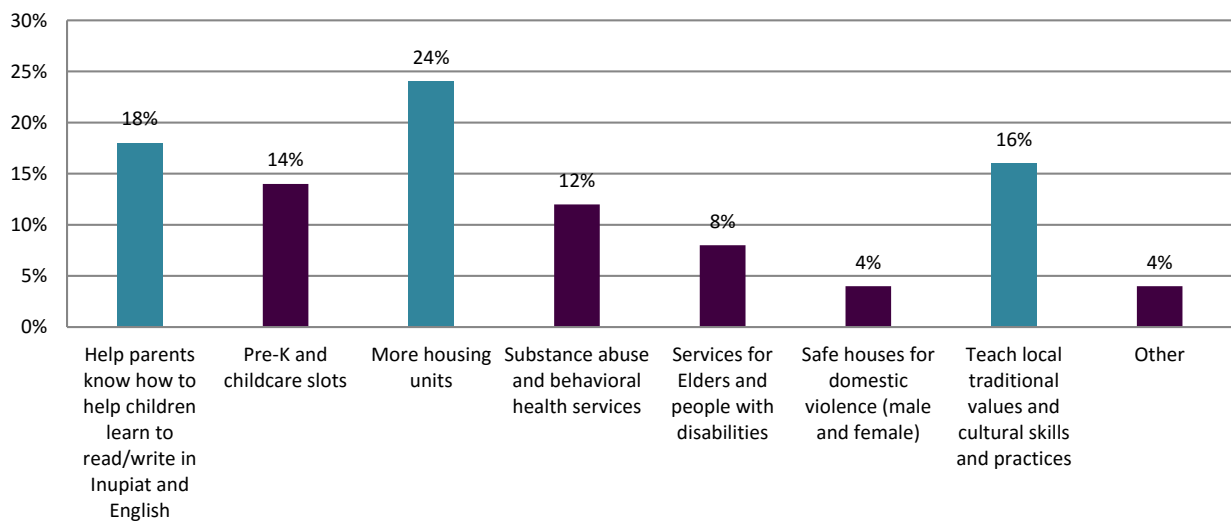
Figure 19: How can you and your community help parents nurture children’s social and emotional skills?



Source: Kotzebue Community Café Audience Response Results.

Figure 20 shows the top identified priorities Kotzebue participants ranked as issues they want their community to act on over the next year to support families. In ranking order they are as follows: more housing units; help parents know how to help children learn to read/write in Inupiat and English; and teach local traditional values and cultural skills and practices.

Figure 20: What priorities do you want our community to act on over the next year to support families?



Source: Kotzebue Community Café Audience Response Results.

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Sitka



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Sitka

Who hosted and who participated?

The Sitka Health Summit coalition hosted the Sitka café. The Sitka Health Summit coalition is a program of Brave Heart Volunteers that pioneers citizen driven and directed health improvement.¹⁵ The Summit hosts an annual Planning Day that provides community members with the opportunity to prioritize community health and wellness needs, and then to collaborate to create year-long initiatives that address these needs.¹⁶ Over 15 people participated in this café from Sitka and Angoon and mainly included community members and/or leaders who identified themselves as parents, educators, and youth.

Summary of what was shared

- Participants expressed a need to do better at sharing information on community resources and disseminating information and available resources that are needed including information on parenting, play groups, hospitals, physician offices, and lactation consultants. A community calendar to announce events are helpful. Publicizing resources is important as some parents do not know what resources they need, what is available or how to access.
- There are lots of non-profits in Sitka and the community needs to make sure to not cross and instead share resources. There appears to be lots of overlap yet at same time organizations have to meet grant requirements for particular areas and projects.
- Need work opportunities and ‘third’ space options for youth, with support system in these spaces. Participants expressed a desire for the community to show interest and involvement in youth/children’s activities, like attending activities/events, even without your own youth involved. Youth are noticing that no adults are present at youth events.
- Employment and volunteer opportunities for middle school and high school age youth who want independence but don’t have a place to be in the community are needed.
- The community needs to assess community readiness to tackle issues. The community has expressed a need for organic gatherings, though it is hard to get community members to attend. Participants expressed the importance of eating meals together; community potlucks, traditional food potlatch picnics, family dinners, etc. so this may be a way to bring the community together for these discussions.



¹⁵ Sitka Health Summit. Welcome to the Summit! <http://www.sitkahealthsummitak.org/>

¹⁶ Ibid.

- Triple P and Positive Indian Parenting are positive programs that help build children up in Sitka.
- Participants discussed the importance of finding balance and taking time for self to avoid burnout.
- Need to allow kids to be kids and allow a creative space to “be” and think for self. Today kids’ schedules are over structured and over programmed. Need to allow kids to be kids and make mistakes.

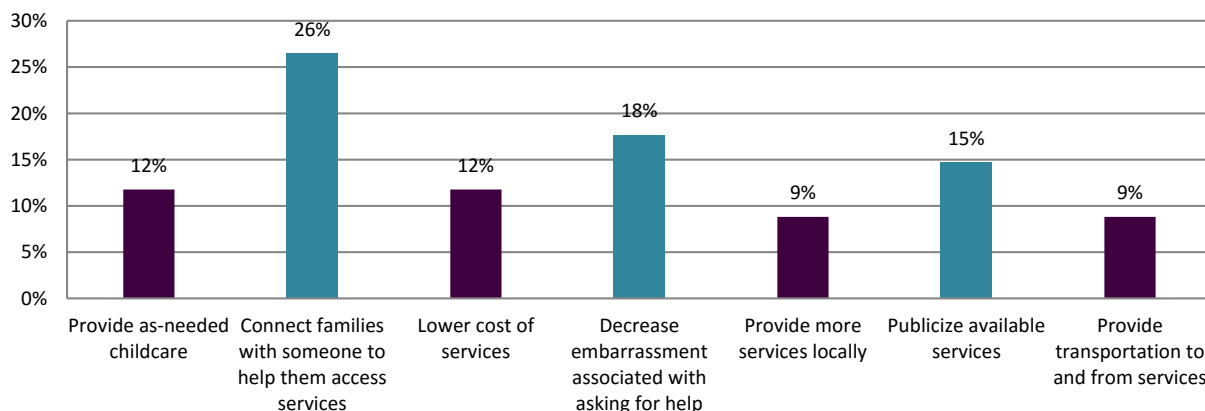
Highlights from audience polling responses

Sitka café participants ranked their community as doing a good job of helping families find concrete supports in times of need and helping families strengthen relationships with family and community. Café participants ranked their community as doing a fair job of helping parents remain stable, calm and nurturing during challenging times; helping parents learn about parenting and child development; and helping parents nurture children’s social and emotional skills. The following figures show how Sitka café participants ranked how their community could help parents with the five protective factors. The last figure in this series shows the top priorities Sitka participants ranked as issues they want their community to act on over the next year to support families.



Figure 21 shows the top ranks for Sitka participants on how they think the community could help parents find concrete supports in times of need. In ranking order they are as follows: connect families with someone to help them access services; decrease embarrassment associated with asking for help; and publicize available services.

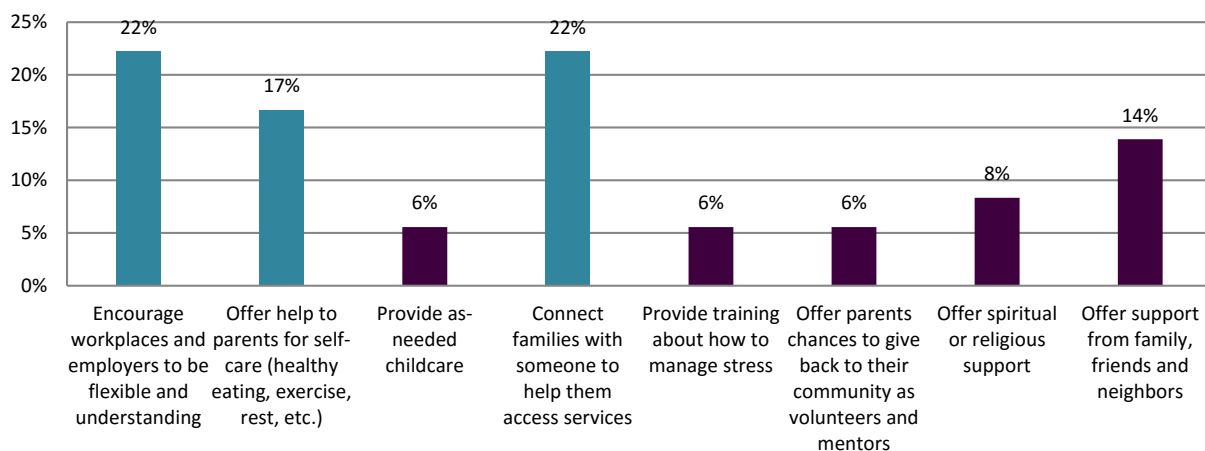
Figure 21: How can you and your community help families find concrete supports in times of need?



Source: Sitka Community Café Audience Response Results.

Figure 22 shows the top ranks for Sitka participants on how they think the community could help parents remain stable, calm and nurturing during challenging times. In ranking order they are as follows: encourage workplaces and employers to be flexible and understanding; connect families with someone to help them access services; and offer help to parents for self-care (healthy eating, exercise, rest, etc.).

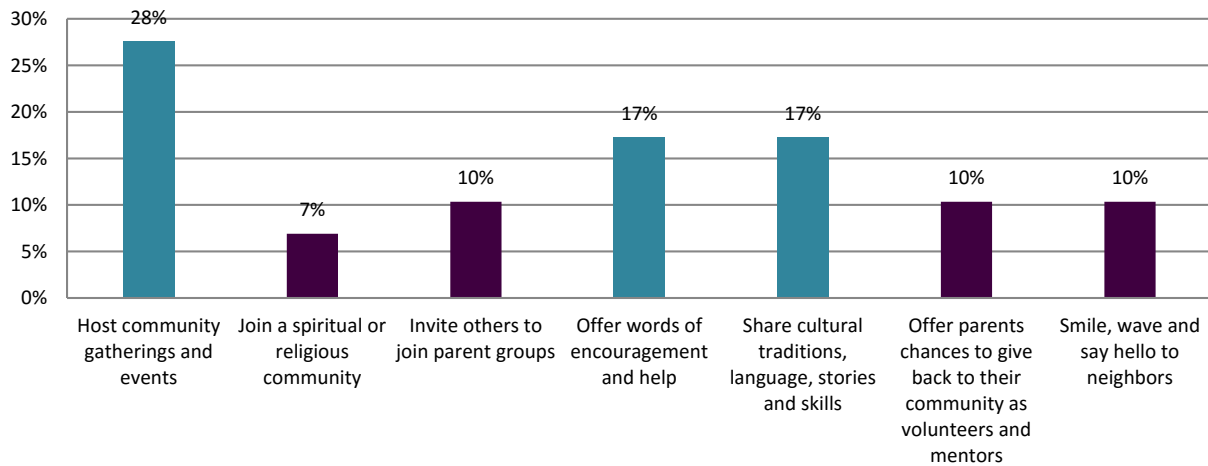
Figure 22: How can you and your community help parents remain stable, calm and nurturing during challenging times?



Source: Sitka Community Café Audience Response Results.

Figure 23 shows the top ranks for Sitka participants on how they think the community could help families strengthen relationships with family and the community. In ranking order they are as follows: host community gatherings and events; offer words of encouragement and help; and share cultural traditions, language, stories and skills.

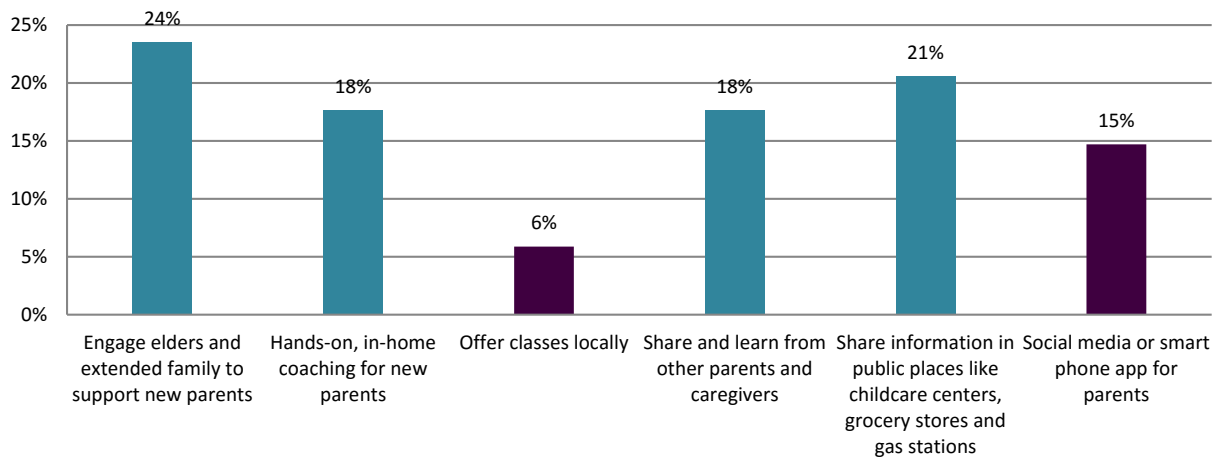
Figure 23: How can you and your community help families strengthen relationships with family and the community?



Source: Sitka Community Café Audience Response Results.

Figure 24 shows the top ranks for Sitka participants on how they think the community could help parents learn about parenting and child development. In ranking order they are as follows: engage elders and extended family to support new parents; share information in public places like childcare centers, grocery stores and gas stations; hands-on, in-home coaching for new parents; and share and learn from other parents and caregivers.

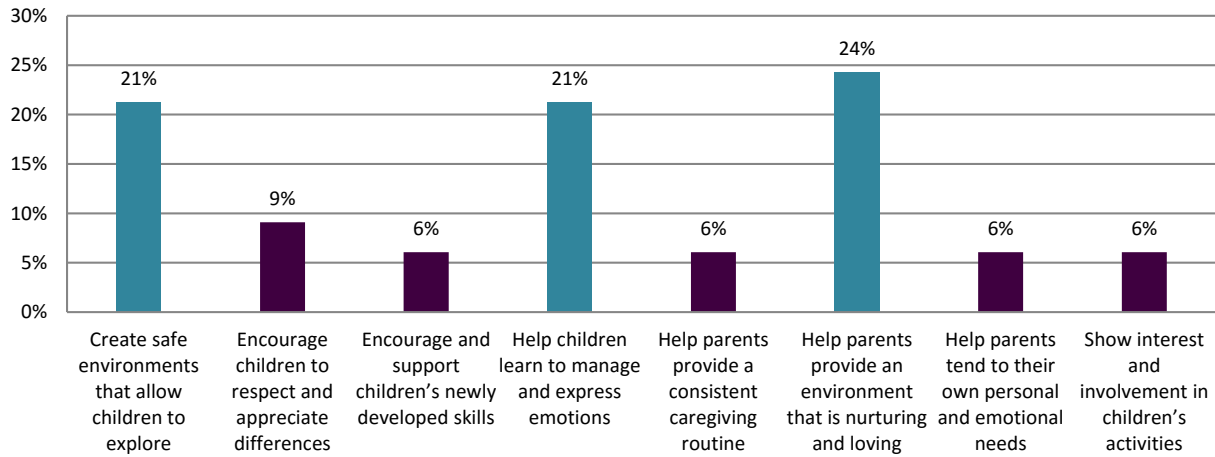
Figure 24: How can you and your community help parents learn about parenting and child development?



Source: Sitka Community Café Audience Response Results.

Figure 25 shows the top ranks for Sitka participants on how they think the community could help parents nurture children’s social and emotional skills. In ranking order they are as follows: help parents provide an environment that is nurturing and loving; create safe environments that allow children to explore; and help children learn to manage and express emotions.

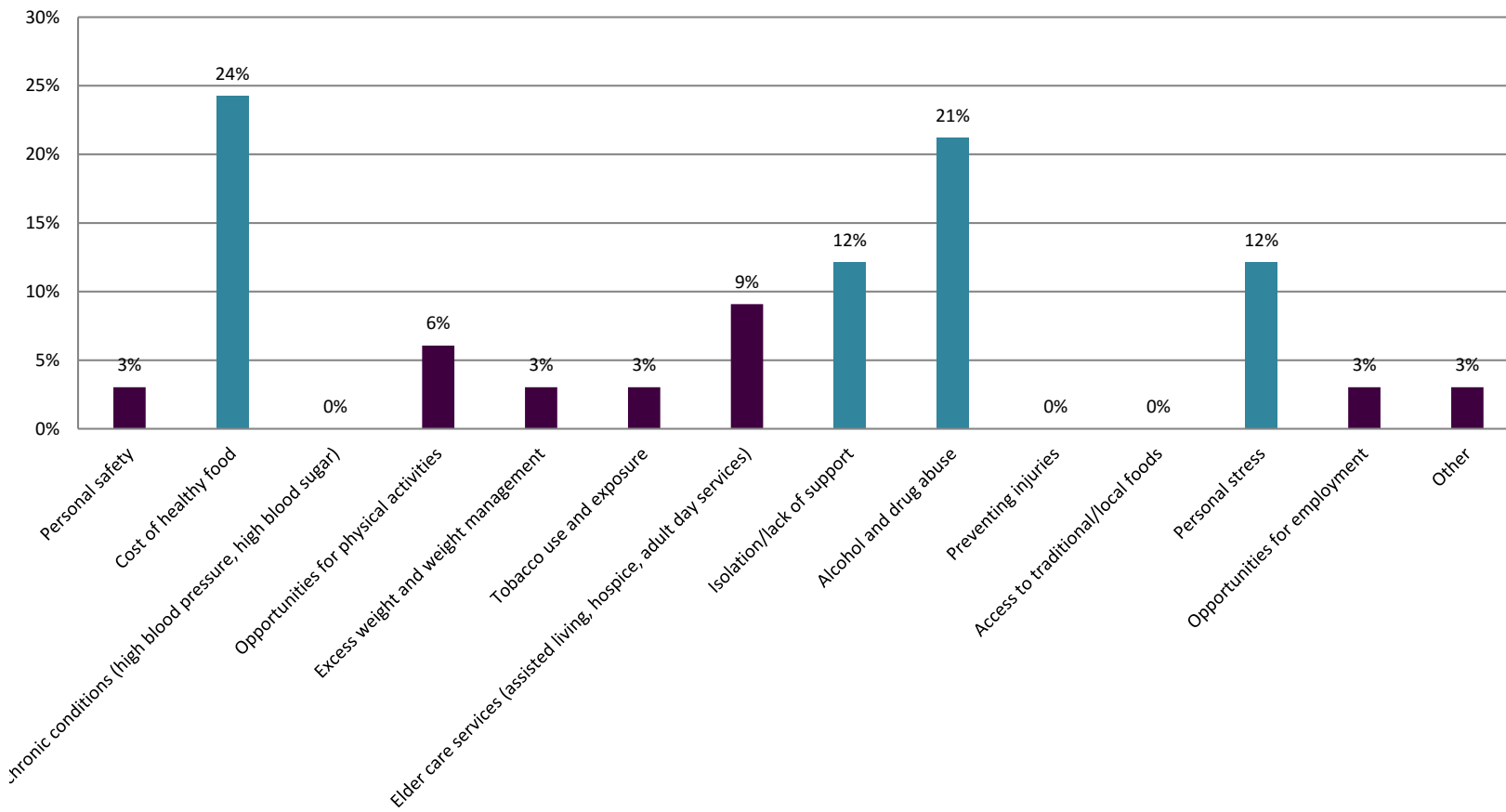
Figure 25: How can you and your community help parents nurture children’s social and emotional skills?



Source: Sitka Community Café Audience Response Results.

Figure 26 shows the top identified priorities Sitka participants ranked as issues they want their community to act on over the next year to support families. In ranking order they are as follows: cost of healthy food; alcohol and drug abuse; isolation/lack of support; and personal stress.

Figure 26: What priorities do you want our community to act on over the next year to support families?



Source: Sitka Community Café Audience Response Results.



Sutton



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Sutton

Who hosted and who participated?

R.O.C.K. Mat-Su: *Raising our Children with Kindness* hosted the Sutton café. R.O.C.K. Mat-Su is an initiative for children and families in the Mat-Su Borough whose goals are to engage and strengthen families to better manage challenges; strengthen our community to better support children and families; and reduce child maltreatment and the number of ACEs Mat-Su



children experience.¹⁷ Over 15 people participated in this café from Sutton, Palmer and Wasilla and mainly included community members and/or leaders who identified themselves as parents, grandparents, service providers, and faith community members and/or leaders.

Summary of what was shared

- Crime, safety, and lack of feeling connected to neighbors were expressed as issues in the community. Participants expressed a need to make the community more welcoming for newcomers especially because it is difficult to ask for help when you know no one. Participants also noted the importance of finding people who are interested in like-minded activities to connect to the community.
- Spiritual supports are seen as important to community members.
- Transportation is a barrier as services are far away.
- Participants expressed concern about not knowing what resources are out there and whether or not they are eligible, which is compounded by frustrating websites that are not user-friendly. “It is exhausting searching for help!” Some participants expressed embarrassment in seeking help and felt services were not deserved.
- Information is posted at the general store, library, and post office. It was suggested that information be posted online as well as on bulletin boards throughout the community. Information and resources are often spread by word-of-mouth. Information helpful to parents are housing options and employment, where to find furniture especially for newcomers, and where to find help with yardwork.
- Need to have an awareness of how difficult parenting can be, begin to have these conversations more openly, and work together to have information ready and available for people who are engaged. Safe places are needed to talk about all parenting topics. More mothers and grandmothers groups are

¹⁷ R.O.C.K. Mat-Su Operational Guidelines. 2016.

needed in Sutton to talk openly and learn together. Another suggestion was an ad campaign to spread awareness to make it easier to talk openly about the struggles of parenting.

- A new trend in the community appears to be online social communities. Participants discussed social supports in online attachment parenting and breastfeeding groups.
- Too many common patterns of stress, anxiety, and feeling overwhelmed; everyone is doing and overpromising too much. Participants expressed a need to learn to say “no.” More play is needed, especially getting more adults together to play and build trust. It is important to spend time as a family, walk, be outside, play games and breathe.
- Supportive neighbors and friends help each other by providing childcare, meals, sharing skills, helping with projects, watching property and pets, getting together for dinner, providing treats during the holidays.

Highlights from audience polling responses

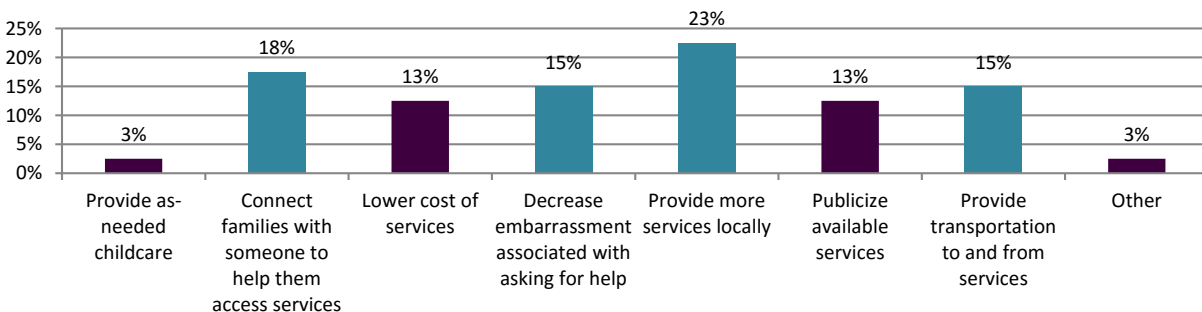
Sutton café participants ranked their community as doing a fair job of helping parents with the five protective factors. The following figures show how Sutton community café participants ranked how their community could help parents with the five protective factors.



Figure 27 shows the top ranks for Sutton participants on how they think the community could help parents find concrete

supports in times of need. In ranking order they are as follows: provide more services locally; connect families with someone to help them access services; decrease embarrassment associated with asking for help; and provide transportation to and from services. For those who chose ‘other’, they shared ‘removing barriers to receiving services, such as filling out long, confusing applications that are too difficult to understand and lack of applications available in other languages’.

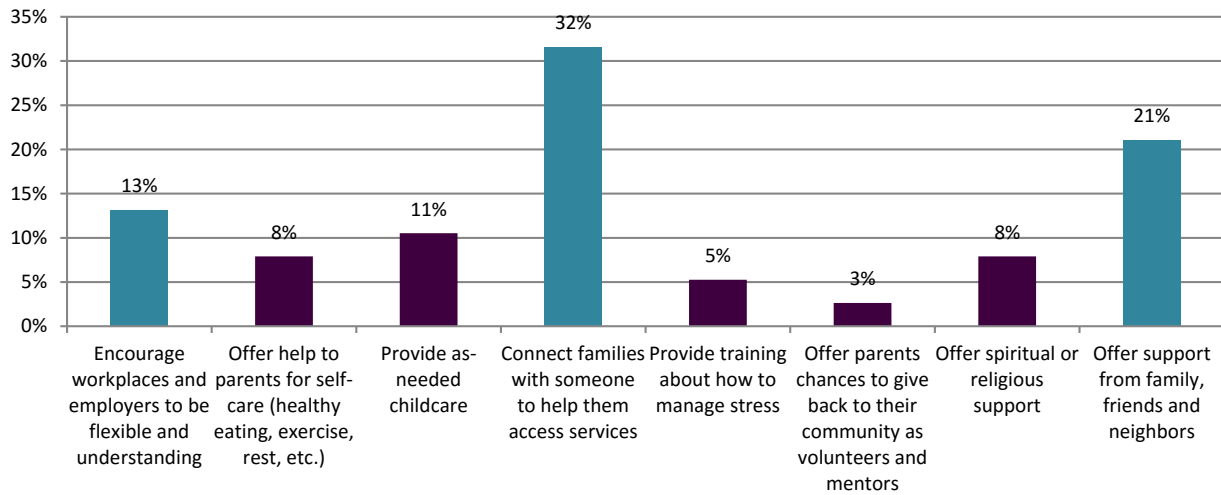
Figure 27: How can you and your community help families find concrete supports in times of need?



Source: Sutton Community Café Audience Response and Online Survey Results.

Figure 28 shows the top ranks for Sutton participants on how they think the community could help parents remain stable, calm and nurturing during challenging times. In ranking order they are as follows: connect families with someone to help them access services; offer support from family, friends and neighbors; and encourage workplaces and employers to be flexible and understanding.

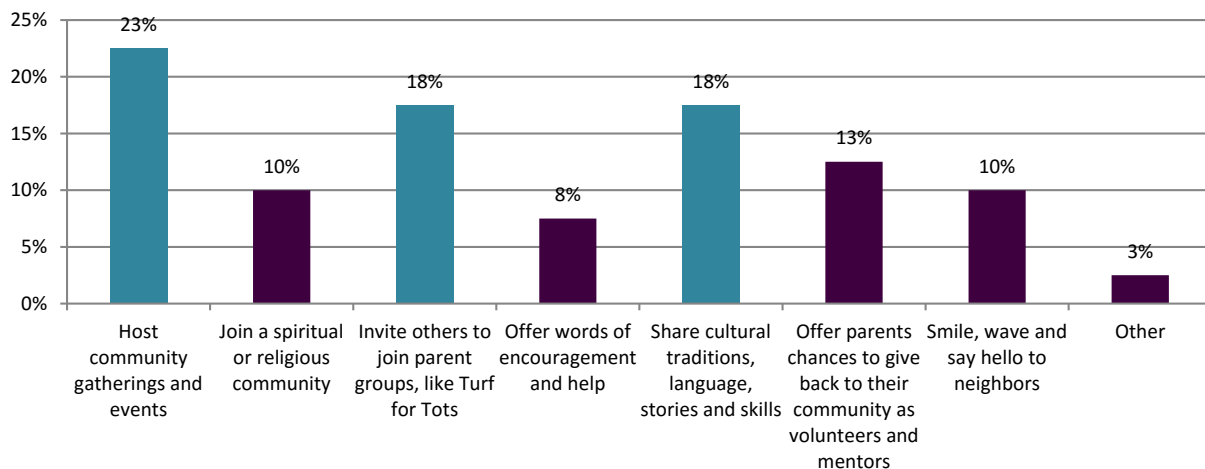
Figure 28: How can you and your community help parents remain stable, calm and nurturing during challenging times?



Source: Sutton Community Café Audience Response and Online Survey Results.

Figure 29 shows the top ranks for Sutton participants on how they think the community could help families strengthen relationships with family and the community. In ranking order they are as follows: host community gatherings and events; invite others to join parent groups, like Turf for Tots; and share cultural traditions, language, stories and skills.

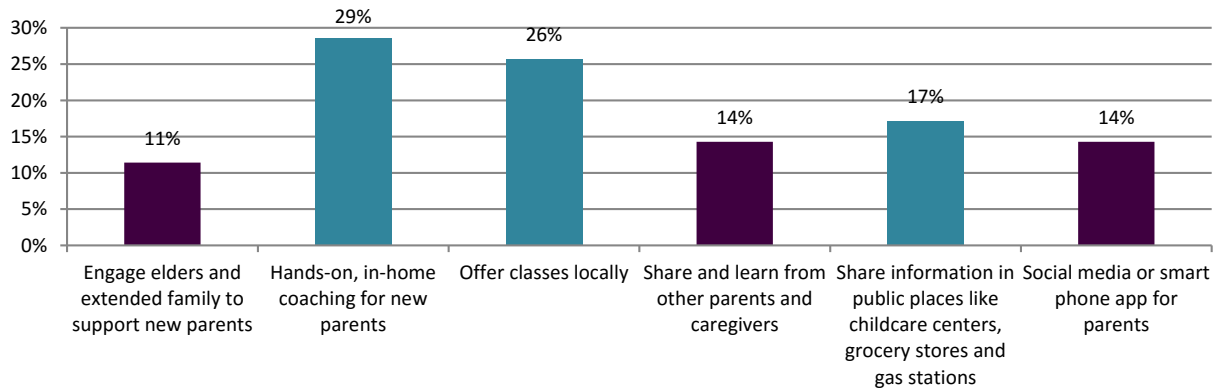
Figure 29: How can you and your community help families strengthen relationships with family and the community?



Source: Sutton Community Café Audience Response and Online Survey Results.

Figure 30 shows the top ranks for Sutton participants on how they think the community could help parents learn about parenting and child development. In ranking order they are as follows: hands-on, in-home coaching for new parents; offer classes locally; and share information in public places like childcare centers, grocery stores and gas stations.

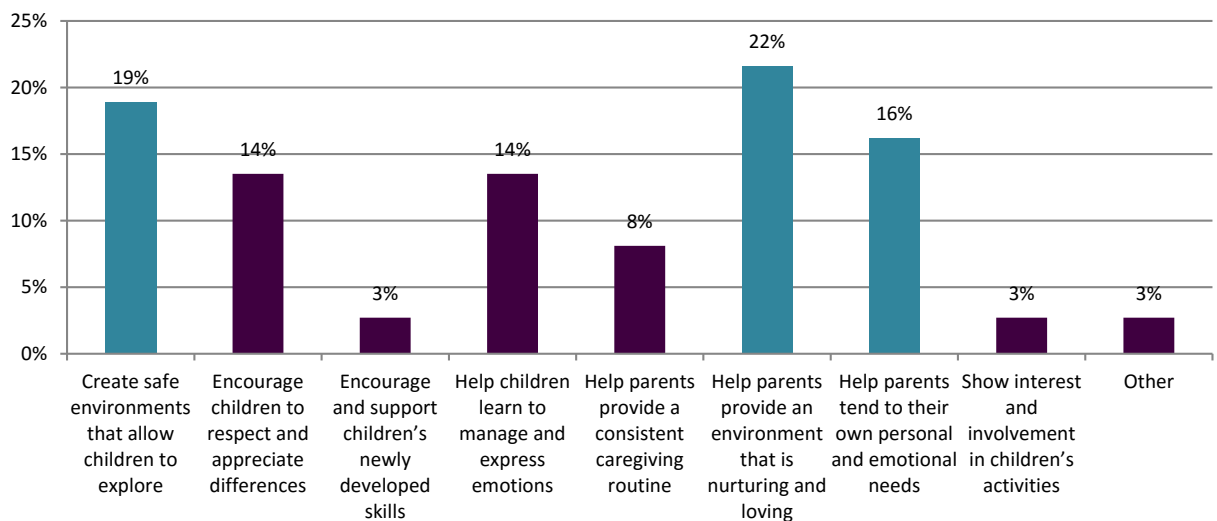
Figure 30: How can you and your community help parents learn about parenting and child development?



Source: Sutton Community Café Audience Response and Online Survey Results.

Figure 31 shows the top ranks for Sutton participants on how they think the community could help parents nurture children’s social and emotional skills. In ranking order they are as follows: help parents provide an environment that is nurturing and loving; create safe environments that allow children to explore; and help parents tend to their own personal and emotional needs. For those who chose ‘other’, they shared ‘address generational trauma, families who didn’t know how to parent’, ‘get to know someone’s story, we are carrying guilt as adults’, and ‘figure out as a community, what is our common history and come up with a common future to help inform what we do’.

Figure 31: How can you and your community help parents nurture children’s social and emotional skills?



Source: Sutton Community Café Audience Response and Online Survey Results.



Wasilla



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Wasilla

Who hosted and who participated?

R.O.C.K. Mat-Su: *Raising our Children with Kindness* hosted the Wasilla café. R.O.C.K. Mat-Su is an initiative for children in families in the Mat-Su Borough whose goals are to engage and strengthen families to better manage challenges; strengthen our community to better support children and families; and reduce child maltreatment and the number of ACEs Mat-Su children experience.¹⁸ About 25 people participated in this café from Butte, Knik-Fairview, Palmer, Wasilla, and other locations and mainly included community members and/or leaders who identified themselves as parents, service providers, faith community members and/or leaders, and educators.

Summary of what was shared

- Crime and safety are concerns in neighborhoods. Some expressed feeling unsafe walking outside, personal belongings being taken, and other crime happening in neighborhoods. Lack of feeling connected to neighbors and fear of neighbors were expressed as some are isolated by being far apart from neighbors, surrounded by trees, “no trespassing” signage, and not living in neighborhood that promote being friendly or getting to know one another. Some expressed being too busy with obligations and not having the emotional time to get to know neighbors. Participants expressed a need to intentionally build these relationships. We live isolated lives and family support is lacking. This culture creates isolation.
- A potential solution that was discussed was to establish a neighbor helping neighbor program so people can create communities within their neighborhood areas or having planned communities where there is space to form connections. There is a need for a community center/gardening spaces.
- Important to be part of a group; people need to have consistent connections with groups of people to enrich lives and receive support such as social and cultural events, craft classes, church. Participants expressed a need to connect more broadly as some do not feel comfortable connecting locally. “You are lucky if you have groups where you have reinforcement in an outside community.”
- Spiritual and religious support is really important.



“Parenting is learning day-by-day. I want to learn and not just “wing it”.”
- Community café participant

¹⁸ R.O.C.K. Mat-Su Operational Guidelines. 2016.

- It is difficult asking for help because of a fear of losing children; some are fearful of reaching out for help that is needed due to shame or embarrassment of their situation. It is a real struggle to make connections or to be willing and able to ask for help. The people who need the help the most have the most barriers and are the most fearful to ask for help. “Once we got the help or experienced the help then we could get the help we needed or were more comfortable asking for help again.”
 - Not knowing what help you need, fear of rejection, embarrassment, shame, long paperwork/process, lack of cooperation between agencies, and “pull yourself up by the bootstraps” mentality are all reasons it is difficult to ask for help.
- It is important to ask youth these same questions since they are brave, naïve and more trusting. The authenticity they provide would be valuable.
- So nice when you can talk to others about parental stress. Need to be able to provide more of these opportunities and make it easier to talk about. Recognize that parenting and “adulthood” are hard; there are simple things we can do day-to-day to help people through hard times.
- Important to have someone help families navigate to find services. Need to develop this system and have navigators in different places/systems, like one in every school, daycare, and church. “This would be so impactful!”
- Power of community schools, low budget, high number of students who attended when there were these programs; funded by the schools, there is a 21st century schools grant that may fund it.
- Put as many services in one spot to make finding services more user-friendly. The Mat-Su has strong organizations that provide many programs. Medical and social service providers need to offer educational opportunities (or groups) starting prenatally for parenting education and skills.
- Nurturing children’s social and emotional skills has been left to the schools to do who are not able to provide this kind of support. Social and emotional skills should be addressed outside of the institution of public education.

Highlights from audience polling responses

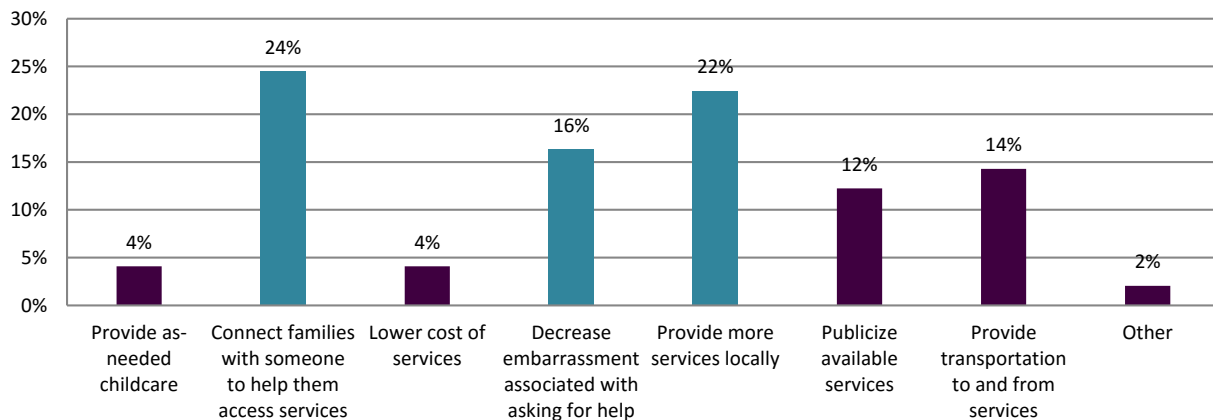
Wasilla community café participants ranked their community as doing a fair to good job helping families strengthen relationships with family and community and helping families learn about parenting and child development. Café participants ranked their community as doing a fair job of helping families find concrete supports in times of need and helping families nurture children’s social and



emotional skills. Café participants ranked their community as doing a poor job at helping parents remain stable, calm and nurturing during challenging times. The following figures show how Wasilla café participants ranked how their community could help parents with the five protective factors.

Figure 32 shows the top ranks for Wasilla participants on how they think the community could help parents find concrete supports in times of need. In ranking order they are as follows: connect families with someone to help them access services, provide more services locally, and decrease embarrassment associated with asking for help.

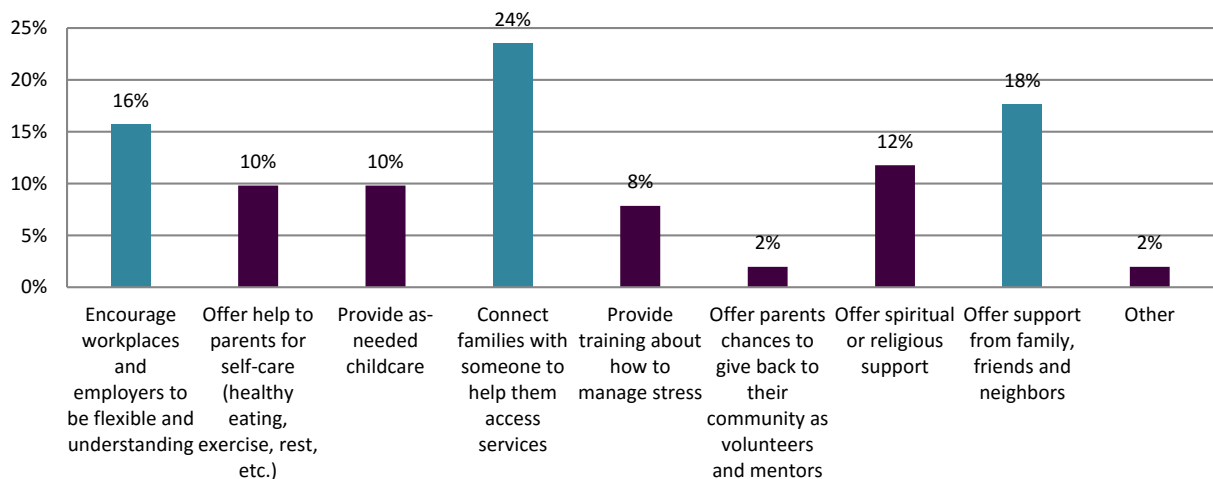
Figure 32: How can you and your community help families find concrete supports in times of need?



Source: Wasilla Community Café Audience Response Results.

Figure 33 shows the top ranks for Wasilla participants on how they think the community could help parents remain stable, calm and nurturing during challenging times. In ranking order they are as follows: connect families with someone to help them access services; offer support from family, friends and neighbors; and encourage workplaces and employers to be flexible and understanding.

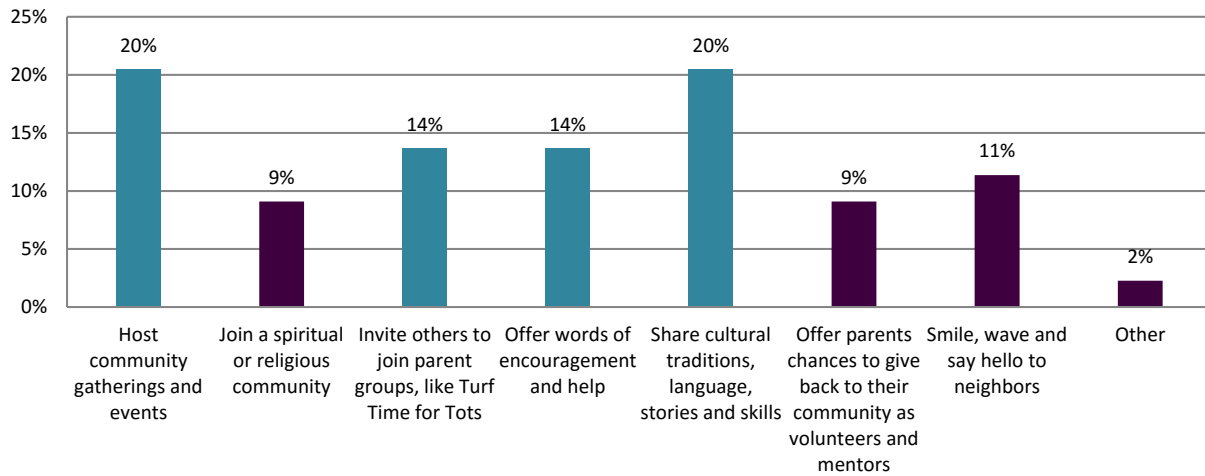
Figure 33: How can you and your community help parents remain stable, calm and nurturing during challenging times?



Source: Wasilla Community Café Audience Response Results.

Figure 34 shows the top ranks for Wasilla participants on how they think the community could help families strengthen relationships with family and the community. In ranking order they are as follows: host community gatherings and events; share cultural traditions, language, stories and skills; invite others to join parent groups, like Turf Time for Tots; and offer words of encouragement and help.

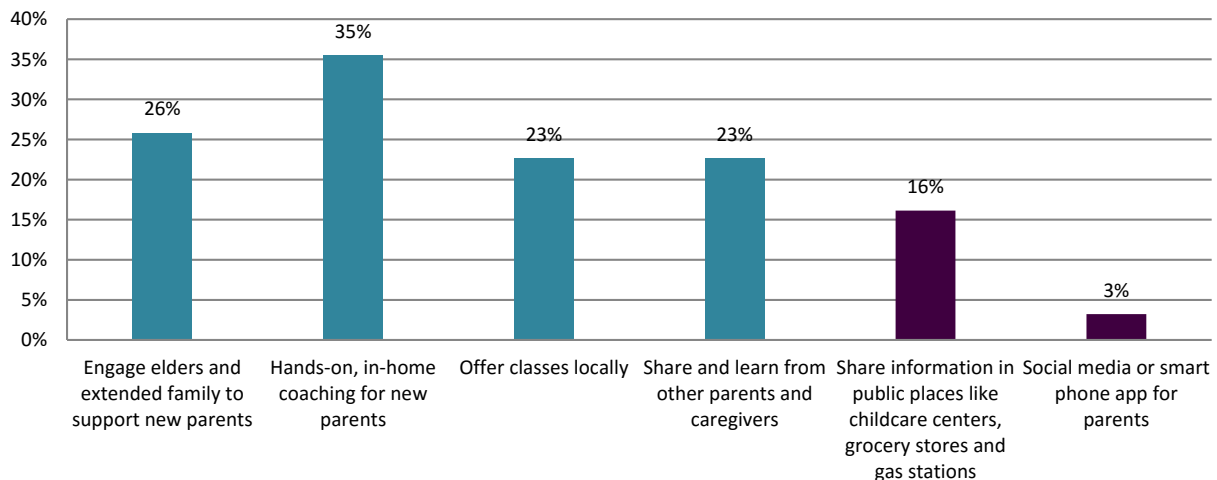
Figure 34: How can you and your community help families strengthen relationships with family and the community?



Source: Wasilla Community Café Audience Response Results.

Figure 35 shows the top ranks for Wasilla participants on how they think the community could help parents learn about parenting and child development. In ranking order they are as follows: hands-on, in-home coaching for new parents; engage elders and extended family to support new parents; offer classes locally; and share and learn from other parents and caregivers.

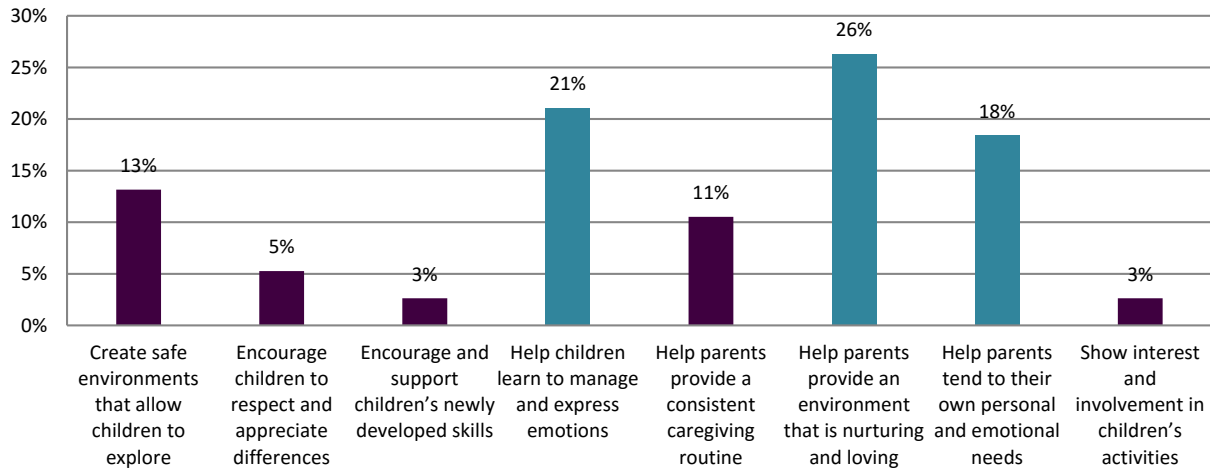
Figure 35: How can you and your community help parents learn about parenting and child development?



Source: Wasilla Community Café Audience Response Results.

Figure 36 shows the top ranks for Wasilla participants on how they think the community could help parents nurture children’s social and emotional skills. In ranking order they are as follows: help parents provide an environment that is nurturing and loving; help children to manage and express emotions; and help parents tend to their own personal and emotional needs.

Figure 36: How can you and your community help parents nurture children’s social and emotional skills?



Source: Wasilla Community Café Audience Response Results.

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Appendix

Community café publicity materials

Agenda

Discussion questions

PowerPoint presentation slides

Strengthening Families Protective Factors posters

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[City/Village] Community Cafe

Let's Talk about Safe Kids and Strong Families!

Come brainstorm how to best strengthen families and create a safe and nurturing environment for children in our community.

What: Community café and discussion

When: [Date and Time]

Where: [Location]
[Address]

Who: All are welcome! Parents, grandparents, service providers, educators, tribal organizations and interested community members and students.

Free Food!

Door Prizes!

Childcare Provided

Elders, adults and youth ages 13 and up are invited to participate in this community-wide dialogue.

Questions? Contact Name, 907-999-9999, email@email.com



[NAME OF COMMUNITY] COMMUNITY CAFÉ

[Location]

[Date and time]

Agenda

Welcome

Turn to your neighbor

- What is your name and what community are you from?
- Who is in your family?
- What brings you here tonight?

Audience participation

Introduction

- Who is hosting the café?
- What is a community café?
- What is going to happen with the information shared?
- What is Strengthening Families and how are we using it at the café?

Audience participation

Café conversations

Commitment card (optional)

Audience participation

Learning from the café conversations

- What insights, common themes, or patterns emerged?
- What were the things that you heard that you hadn't heard before?
- Were there things, ideas, etc. that we should think more about?
- Is there action we should take?

Closing

- Silent reflection and sharing
- Door prizes
- Evaluation



[Name of Community] **COMMUNITY CAFÉ**
[Location]
[Date and time]

SUGGESTED DISCUSSION QUESTIONS / QUESTION PROMPTS

Let's Talk about Safe Kids and Strong Families!

Parental Resilience:

- Who helps you overcome challenges in your life? What do they do that helps?
- How do you recognize when there's too much stress in your life and what do you do about it?

Social Connections:

- Who are the most important influences on you as a parent, and how have they influenced you?
- What habits does your community have that don't contribute to good health and how could you introduce new ones?

Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development:

- How have your experiences growing up affected your parenting?
- How can we better teach traditional values and culture to our young people?
- What's difficult about being a parent and how do you deal with it?

Concrete Support in Times of Need:

- Besides friends and family, who supports you and what difference does it make?
- How can our community help support our people when a young person is in trouble or when a child needs help?

Social and Emotional Competence of Children:

- How do you provide physical and emotional safety for your child(ren)?
- How do you teach your child to deal with his or her feelings?
- How do your children know you love and respect them?

Other suggested discussion questions:

- What does the ideal family support system look like?
- What would really help to strengthen families in your community?

THE FIVE PROTECTIVE FACTORS

Research shows that the five Strengthening Families Protective Factors keep families strong:

Parental Resilience – Being Strong and Flexible

As parents, in order to deal with the stresses of life, we need to be strong and flexible, and we need to be able to bounce back when adversity hits. We need to be psychologically and emotionally healthy so that we can be present and deal with long-term solutions instead of just reacting to every situation as it comes up. It helps to have role models, resources, and encouragement to be able to deal with challenges while nurturing your children, especially if you were treated harshly as a child. Family-serving programs can help us form trusting friendships with people who can help us stay healthy and resilient. By creating a welcoming atmosphere; providing time, space, and opportunities for supportive relationships to develop among parents; and being available to parents for informal conversation or formal problem solving, staff and other parents at these programs help us become and stay resilient by encouraging us and providing us with concrete strategies.

Social Connections – Parents Need Friends.

When parents have positive, trusted friends in the community, there is a support system for meeting both practical and emotional needs. We can brainstorm about problems together, give and receive back-up childcare, give each other rides, and meet other needs as they come up. Together, we work out and model the ways in which family and community issues should be handled. Whether at an after-school program, church, or just on the corner playground, it's important that we get to know each other so that we know we always have support and we're not alone in dealing with the challenges of parenting. These relationships also give us people to celebrate with when things are going well.

Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development – Being a Great Parent is Part Natural and Part Learned

Children don't come with a manual. Parenting is a continuous learning process, and it's important to understand normal child development so that we can have reasonable expectations of our children. When our children are acting out or engaging in challenging behavior, we need to have good strategies for dealing with that behavior that don't involve overly harsh punishments. Being involved in a quality family-serving program helps us learn what to expect from our children and lets us see how other people deal with children's behavior. We can watch our own children interact with others and strategize with staff and other parents to resolve problems. We can also request and take parenting education workshops on topics we're interested in.

Concrete Support in Times of Need – Everybody Needs Help

Everybody needs help sometimes, and families that can get help when they need it are able to stay strong and healthy. It is a sign of strength to ask for help when you need it. Whether the need is caused by a sudden crisis – like a death in the family or loss of employment – or an ongoing issue such as substance abuse or depression, being able to ask for and receive help is important in keeping our families strong. Sometimes the first step in getting help is seeing that our children's well-being depends on it. Often it takes a caring person in the community to help connect us to what we need, whether it is job training, transportation, food assistance, or mental health services. Parents and staff of family-serving programs band together to help families going through difficult times and provide all kinds of concrete support, including food and clothing.

Social and Emotional Competence of Children – Parents Need to Help Their Children Communicate.

Children need to learn how to manage their emotions, express their needs and feelings, deal with conflict, and get along with others. When children can do these things, our job as parents becomes less stressful. There are quality programs – family support, early childhood education, after-school, and other programs – that help children develop social and emotional skills and work with parents to understand children's feelings and actions. They can help us understand what is normal and what is not for children in a given age group, and they can help detect signs that a child has special needs or developmental disabilities or has suffered trauma. They can work with parents to intervene effectively and get specialized help.¹

¹ Be Strong Families/Strengthening Families Illinois. Parent Café Guide Book.

Community Café: [Name of Community]

Let's Talk about Safe Kids
and Strong Families!

[Date]

[Location]

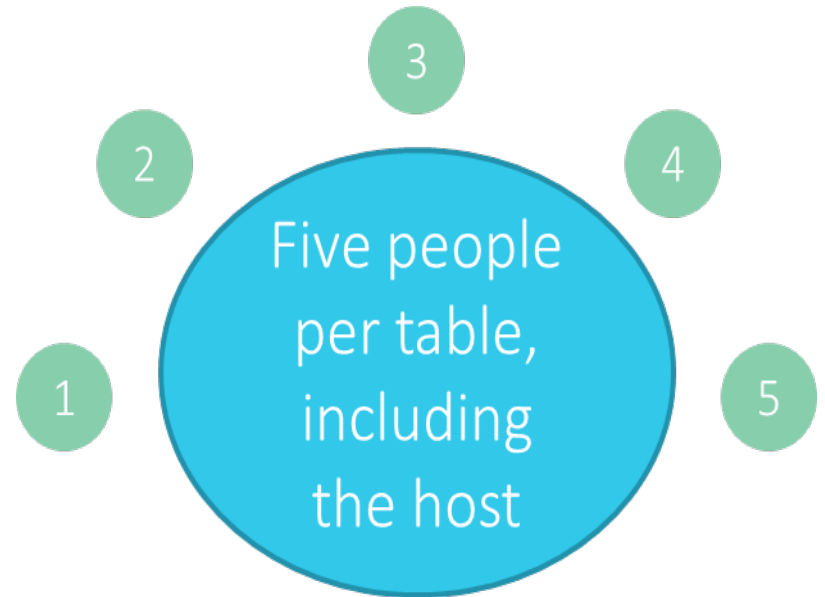




Welcome!

Turn to your neighbor

- a. What is your name, where do you live and what community are you from?
- b. Who is in your family?
- c. What brings you here tonight?



How to use the clickers

When submitting responses, please point your clicker at the laptop.

After entering your response, hit “SEND.”

Raise your hand if you have questions.



= slide has an audience response component

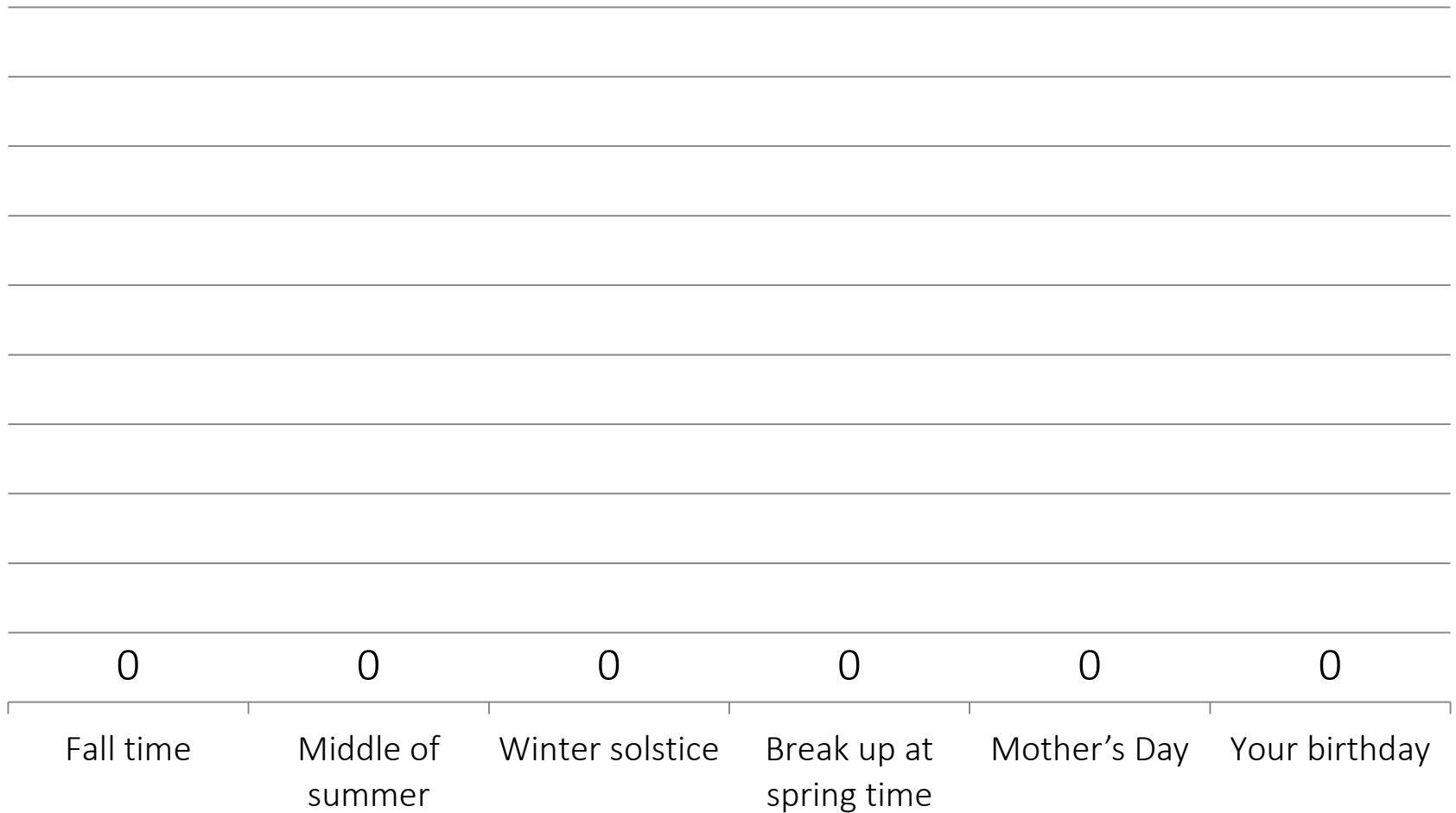
Test: What is your favorite time of the year?

Select your answer choice and hit "SEND"

1. Fall time
2. Middle of summer
3. Winter solstice
4. Break up at spring time
5. Mother's Day
6. Your birthday



RESULTS: Favorite time of the year



What community are you from?

Select your entry and press "SEND".

1. Name of community
2. Name of community
3. Name of community
4. Name of community
5. Other



RESULTS: Community

0

Sample Choice

Which of the following roles describe you?

Select all that apply. Hit "SEND" after each entry.

1. Community member and/or leader
2. Business person
3. Educator
4. Elected official or staff
5. Faith community member and/or leader
6. Foster parent/guardian
7. Grandparent
8. Military
9. Parent
10. Other relative
11. Retired
12. Service provider
13. Tribal member and/or leader
14. Youth
15. Other



RESULTS: Roles

0

Sample Choice



Introduction

Introduction

- **Who is hosting the café?**
- What is a community café?
- What is going to happen with the information that is shared?
- What is Strengthening Families and how are we using it at the café?

Introduction

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- Who is hosting the café?
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Introduction

- Who is hosting the café?
- What is a community café?
- What is going to happen with the information that is shared?
- **What is Strengthening Families and how are we using it at the café?**



Audience Questions: Family and Community Support

How can you and your community help families meet basic needs?

*Select your top **three** choices and press “SEND” after each choice.*

1. Provide as-needed childcare
2. Connect families with someone to help them access services
3. Lower cost of services
4. Decrease embarrassment associated with asking for help
5. Provide more services locally
6. Publicize available services
7. Provide transportation to and from services
8. Other



RESULTS: How to help families meet basic needs

0

Sample Choice

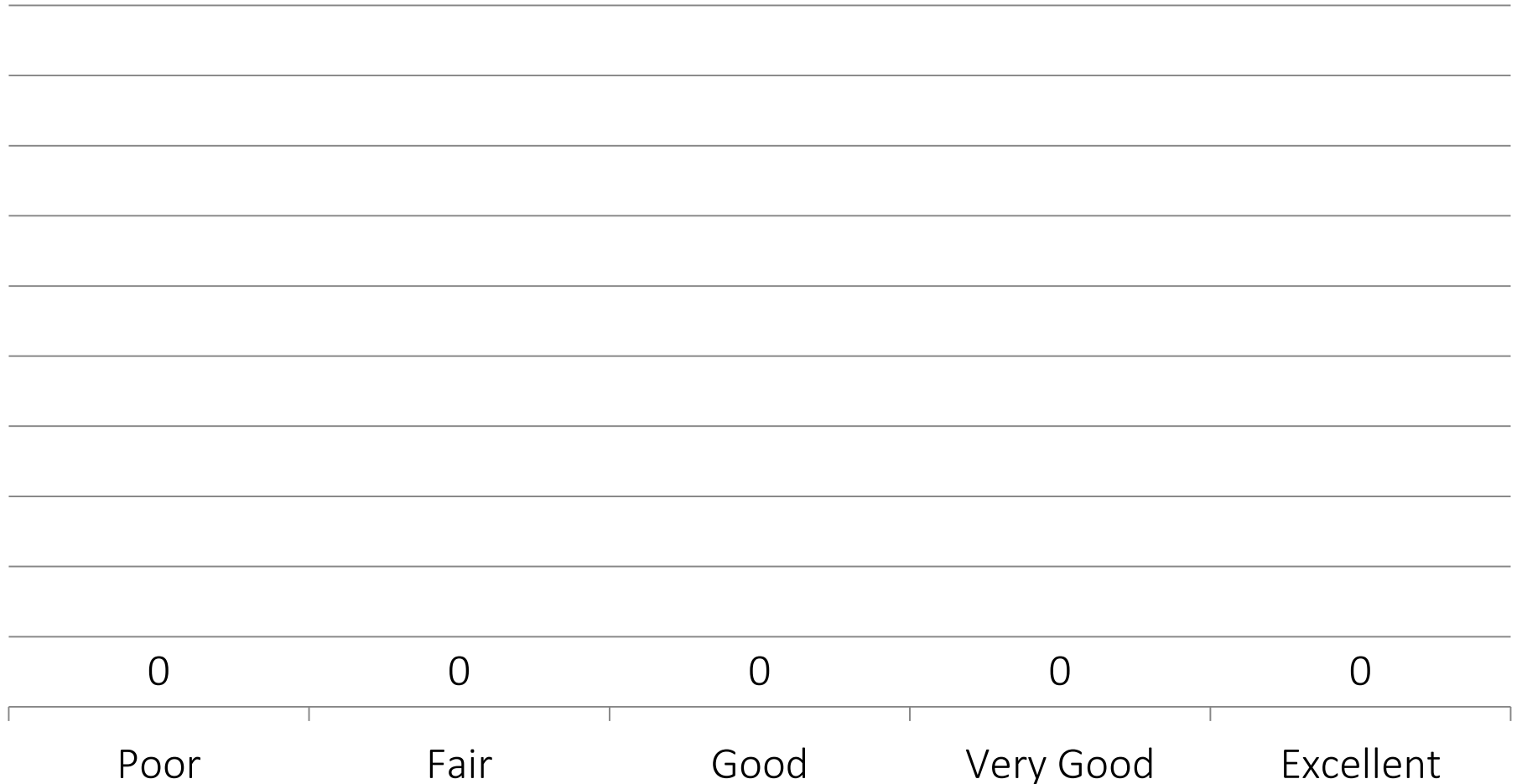
On a scale of 1-5, does your community help families meet basic needs?

Select your answer choice and press "SEND".

1. Poor
2. Fair
3. Good
4. Very Good
5. Excellent



RESULTS: How well we help families meet basic needs



How can you and your community help parents remain stable and nurturing during challenges?

*Select your top **three** choices and press “SEND” after each choice.*

1. Encourage workplaces and employers to be flexible and understanding
2. Offer help to parents for self-care (healthy eating, exercise, rest, etc.)
3. Provide as-needed childcare
4. Connect families with someone to help them access services
5. Provide training about how to manage stress
6. Offer parents chances to give back to their community as volunteers and mentors
7. Offer spiritual or religious support
8. Offer support from family, friends and neighbors
9. Other



RESULTS: How to help parents remain stable and nurturing during challenges

0

Sample Choice

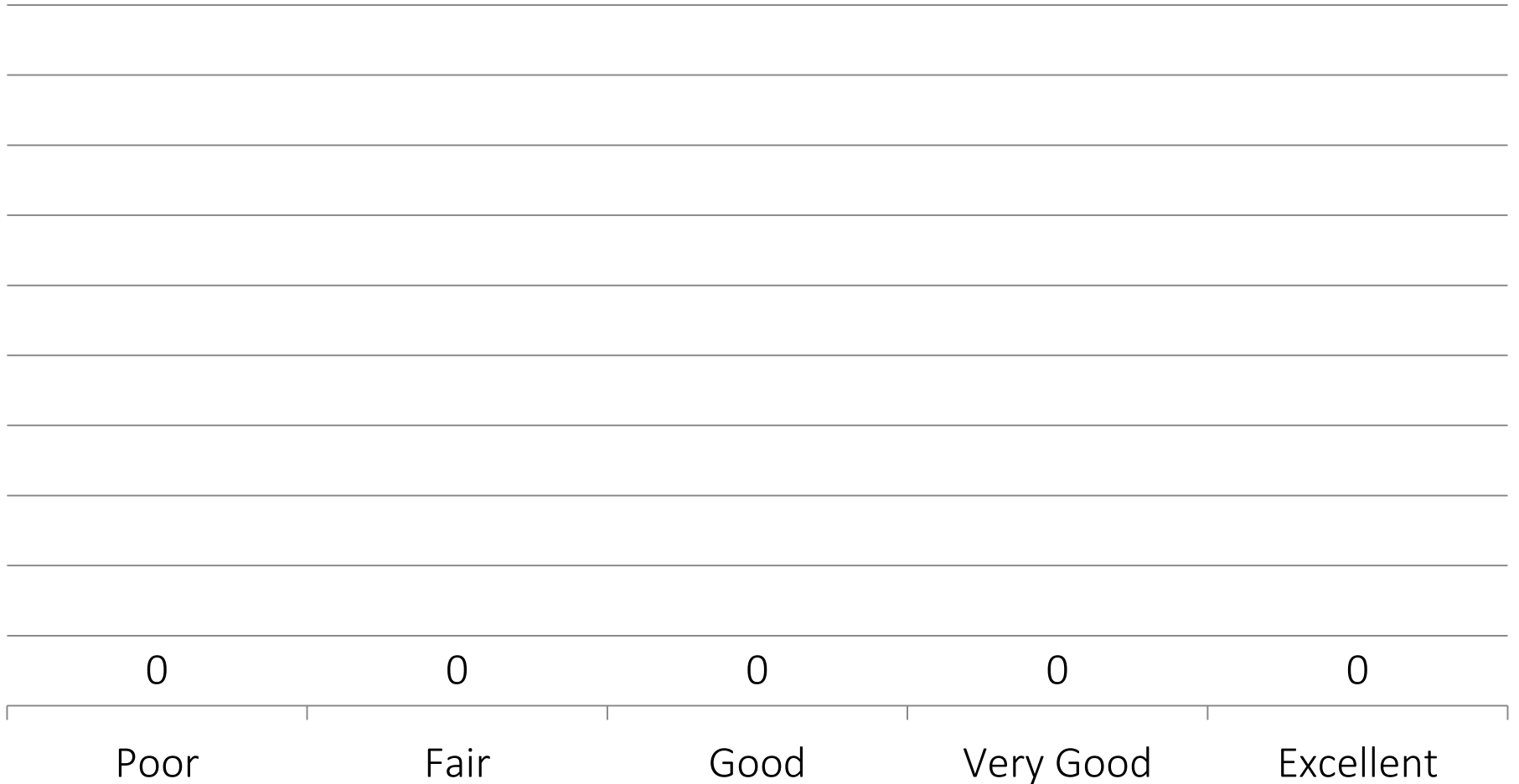
On a scale of 1-5, does your community help parents remain stable and nurturing during challenges?

Select your answer choice and press "SEND".

1. Poor
2. Fair
3. Good
4. Very Good
5. Excellent



RESULTS: How well we help parents remain stable and nurturing during challenges



How can you and your community help families strengthen relationships?

Select your top **three** choices and press “SEND” after each choice.

1. Host community gatherings and events
2. Join a spiritual or religious community
3. Invite others to join parent groups
4. Offer words of encouragement and help
5. Share cultural traditions, language, stories and skills
6. Offer parents chances to give back to their community as volunteers and mentors
7. Smile, wave and say hello to neighbors
8. Other



RESULTS: How to help families strengthen relationships

0

Sample Choice

On a scale of 1-5, does your community help families strengthen relationships?

Select your answer choice and press "SEND".

1. Poor
2. Fair
3. Good
4. Very Good
5. Excellent



RESULTS: How well we help families strengthen relationships



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Poor

Fair

Good

Very Good


Excellent



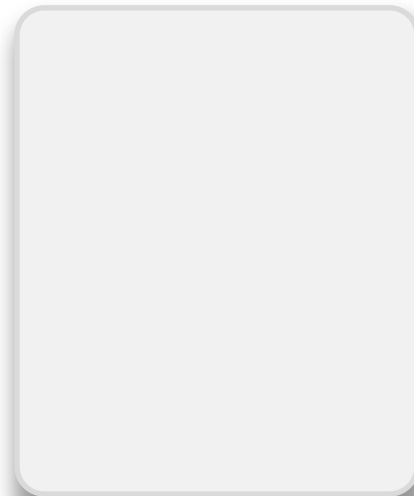
Café Conversations

Café Conversations

- Three rounds, 15-20 minutes per round
- Use the list of protective factors on your table and choose one question to focus on for each round



Feel free to write down
thoughts, ideas, etc. on
post-its on your table



Café Agreements

- Speak from your own experience. Use “I” statements.
- Listen attentively. Do not interrupt.
- No judgements, positive or negative.
- Do not give advice.
- What is talked about in the community café stays in the community café.
- Turn your cell phone off or silence it.

Commitment Card

- Using the letters and envelopes on your table, write a short note to yourself with anything you want to remember from today's café.
- Self-address your commitment card and pass them to your table host.
- The café team will mail commitment letters a week or two after the café.

Note: this is an optional activity.



Audience Questions: Parenting and Child Development

How can you and your community help parents learn about parenting and child development?

*Select your top **three** choices and press “SEND” after each choice.*

1. Engage elders and extended family to support new parents
2. Hands-on, in-home coaching for new parents
3. Offer classes locally
4. Share and learn from other parents and caregivers
5. Share information in public places like childcare centers, grocery stores and gas stations
6. Social media or smart phone app for parents
7. Other



RESULTS: How to help parents learn about parenting and child development

0

Sample Choice

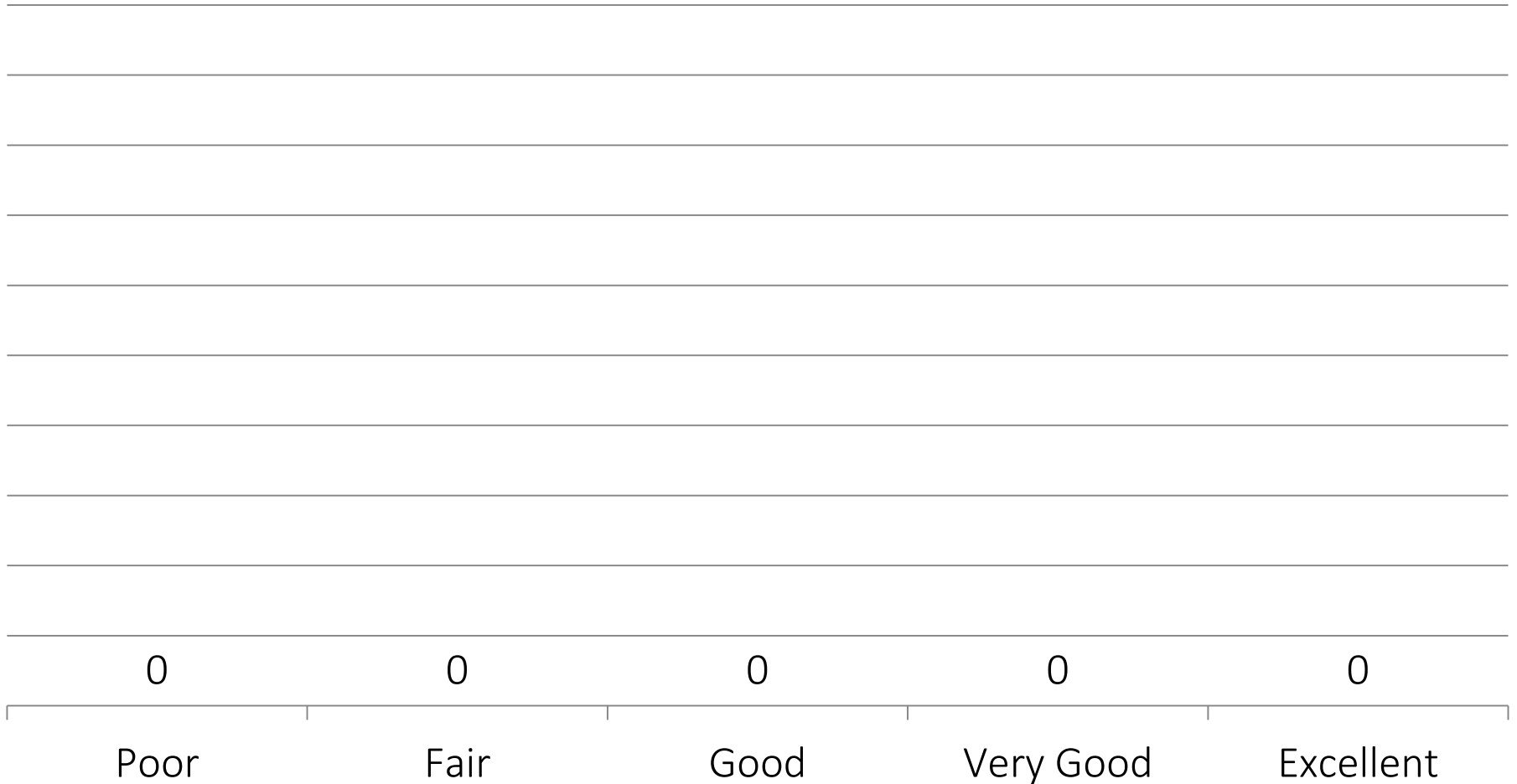
On a scale of 1-5, does your community help parents learn about parenting and child development?

Select your answer choice and press "SEND".

1. Poor
2. Fair
3. Good
4. Very Good
5. Excellent



RESULTS: How well your community helps parents learn about parenting and child development



How can you and your community help parents nurture children's social and emotional skills?

Select your top three choices. Hit "SEND" after each choice.

1. Create safe environments that allow children to explore
2. Encourage children to respect and appreciate differences
3. Encourage and support children's newly developed skills
4. Help children learn to manage and express emotions
5. Help parents provide a consistent caregiving routine
6. Help parents provide an environment that is nurturing and loving
7. Help parents tend to their own personal and emotional needs
8. Show interest and involvement in children's activities
9. Other



RESULTS: How communities help parents nurture children's social and emotional skills

0

Sample Choice

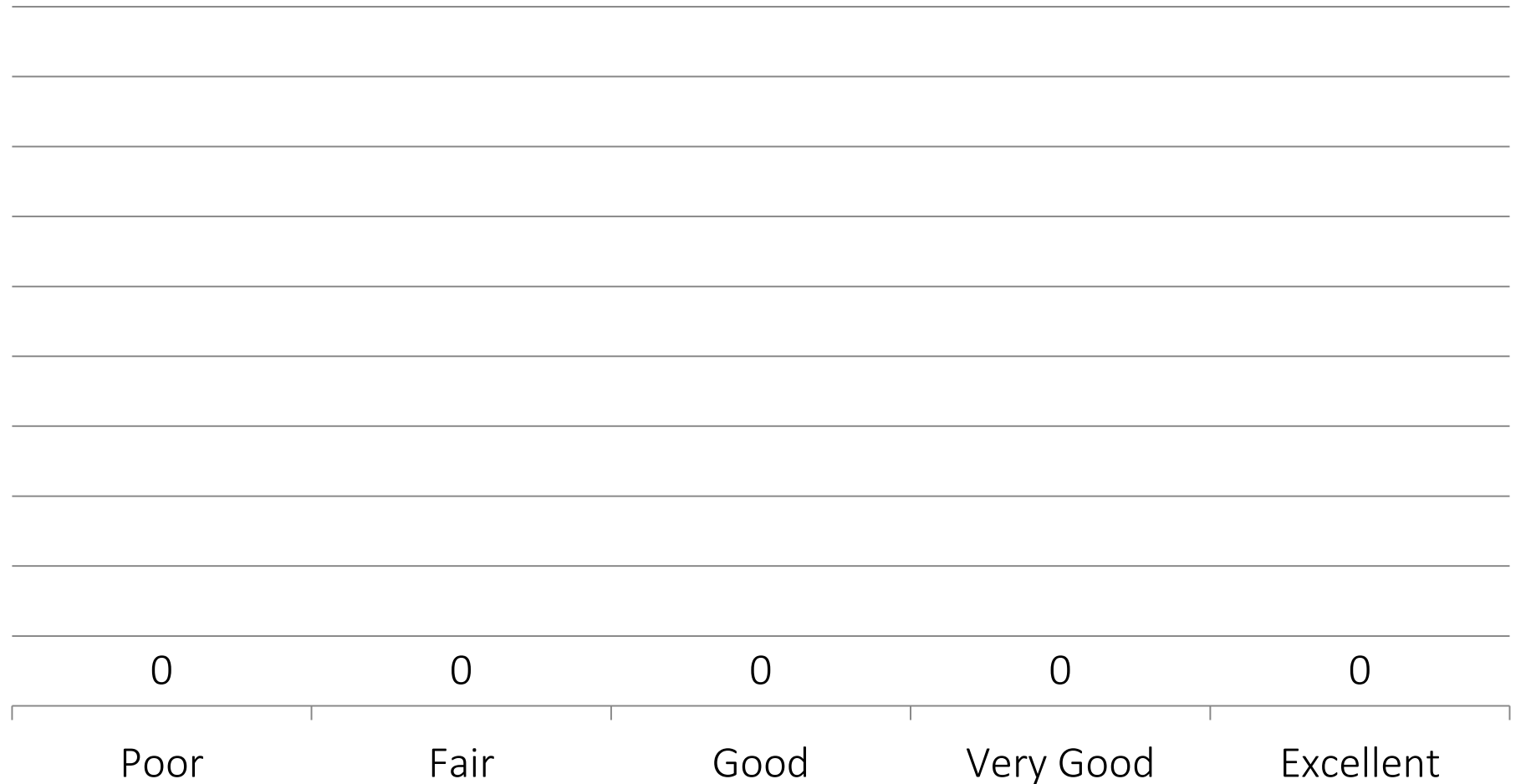
On a scale of 1-5, does your community help parents nurture children's social and emotional skills?

Select your answer choice and press "SEND".

1. Poor
2. Fair
3. Good
4. Very Good
5. Excellent



RESULTS: How well your community helps parents nurture children's social and emotional skills





What did we hear?

Learning from the Café Conversations

- What insights, common themes, or patterns emerged?
- What were the things that you heard that you hadn't heard before?
- Were there ideas that we should think more about?
- Is there action we should take?



Community Priorities

What priorities do you want our community to act on over the next year to support families?

Select your top three choices. Hit "SEND" after each choice.

1. Help parents know how to help children learn to read/write in Yupik and English
2. Pre-K and childcare slots
3. More housing units
4. Substance abuse and behavioral health services
5. Services for Elders and people with disabilities
6. Safe houses for domestic violence (male and female)
7. Teach local traditional values and cultural skills and practices
8. Other



Note: this is an optional polling question.

RESULTS: Priorities our community should act on over the next year to support families

0

Sample Choice



Wrap-Up

Closing

- Silent reflection and sharing
- Door prizes
- Evaluation

THANK YOU!



Parental Resilience



I WILL CONTINUE TO HAVE COURAGE DURING STRESS OR AFTER A CRISIS¹ (COURAGE)

No one can eliminate stress from parenting, but a parent's capacity for resilience can affect how a parent deals with stress. Resilience is the ability to manage and bounce back from all types of challenges that emerge in every family's life. It means finding ways to solve problems, building and sustaining trusting relationships including relationships with your own child, and knowing how to seek help when necessary.²

What strengths do you rely on to get through a crisis or tough times?

¹ Strengthening Families through Meaningful Conversations. Community Café.

² Center for the Study of Social Policy

Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development



I AM CURIOUS AND RESPONSIVE TO WHAT MY CHILDREN NEED³ (FREEDOM)

Accurate information about child development and appropriate expectations for children's behavior at every age help parents see their children and youth in a positive light and promote their healthy development. Information can come from many sources including family member as well as parent education classes and surfing the internet. Studies show information is most effective when it comes at the precise time parents need it to understand their own children. Parents who experienced harsh discipline or other negative childhood experiences may need extra help to change the parenting patterns they learned as children.⁴

Who do you rely on when you need more information?

³ Strengthening Families through Meaningful Conversations. Community Café.

⁴ Center for the Study of Social Policy.

Concrete Support in Times of Need



MY FAMILY HAS ACCESS TO BASIC NEEDS⁵

Meeting basic economic needs like food, shelter, clothing and health care is essential for families to thrive. Likewise, when families encounter a crisis such as domestic violence, mental illness or substance abuse, adequate services and supports need to be in place to provide stability, treatment and help for family members to get through the crisis.⁶

What do you consider to be basic needs for your family?

⁵ Strengthening Families through Meaningful Conversations. Community Café.

⁶ Center for the Study of Social Policy.

Social Connections



I HAVE PEOPLE WHO KNOW ME, FRIENDS AND AT LEAST ONE PERSON WHO SUPPORTS MY PARENTING⁷ (COMMUNITY)

Friends, family members, neighbors and community members provide emotional support, help solve problems, offer parenting advice and give concrete assistance to parents. Networks of support are essential to parents and also offer opportunities for people to “give back”, an important part of self-esteem as well as a benefit for the community. Isolated families may need extra help in reaching out to build positive relationships.⁸

What helps you feel you belong?

⁷ Strengthening Families through Meaningful Conversations. Community Café.

⁸ Center for the Study of Social Policy.

Social and Emotional Development of Children



MY CHILD FEELS LOVED, A SENSE OF BELONGING AND CAN GET ALONG WITH OTHERS⁹ (COMPASSION)

A child or youth's ability to interact positively with others, self-regulate their behavior and effectively communicate their feelings has a positive impact on their relationships with their family, other adults, and peers. Challenging behaviors or delayed development creates extra stress for families, so early identification and assistance for both parents and children can head off negative results and keep development on track.¹⁰

How does my child learn compassion- to be aware of the feelings of others?

⁹ Strengthening Families through Meaningful Conversations. Community Café.

¹⁰ Center for the Study of Social Policy.