

Parent



PERSPECTIVE

About raising children in Volusia County

a community publication of

One Voice for Volusia
Connecting Our Community

Acknowledgement

One Voice for Volusia gratefully acknowledges and thanks everyone who volunteered their time to make this project a success: the agencies that hosted focus groups, agency staff who volunteered to facilitate or record the focus groups, and most notably, the parents throughout Volusia County who shared their ideas and perspective with us.

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Table of Contents

Executive Summary & Key Findings.....	4
Project Methodology.....	5
Focus Group Component & Findings.....	7
Parent Survey Component & Findings.....	9
What's Next?	10
Detailed Data Tables & Charts.....	11

Executive Summary

During One Voice for Volusia's strategic planning efforts in 2005, coalition members identified the need to connect with Volusia County parents as a companion project to the 2004 Youth PERSPECTIVE project. The coalition established several key questions to be addressed through parent focus groups and a locally-designed parent survey including:

- What kinds of information do parents need to know to successfully raise their children in our community?
- Where do parents go to find information about programs, services or activities for their children?
- What types of barriers or problems have parents encountered when trying to access programs, services, resources, or activities for their children?

This Parent PERSPECTIVE report is the culmination of over six months of work facilitating focus groups and conducting surveys. Our hope is that members of the One Voice for Volusia coalition, other family-serving organizations and community leaders will use the findings contained in this report as a valuable resource in their work to support and effectively communicate with parents.

One Voice for Volusia is a coalition that connects non-profit, governmental and community-based organizations along with local businesses to promote community improvements for the benefit of youth and families in Volusia County. Through research, consensus building and the coordination of resources, One Voice for Volusia takes a leadership role in improving the quality of life for youth and families.

Key Findings

Through the parent focus groups and accompanying survey conducted throughout the community, One Voice has learned many things related to parents' needs and concerns. Among those identified, the following concerns were repeated throughout the process:

- Although most parents turn to family and friends for information and guidance, schools and child care providers are the formal resource parents turn to most frequently when they are seeking information or direction.
- Parents are often unable to articulate their needs for information or services to assist them until they are faced with a particular problem.
- Customer service was a major concern of parents: they regularly reported difficulty in accessing information or help when they contacted local agencies for help or information.
- Access to affordable health insurance, after school care, child care and tutoring top the list of parent concerns.
- Parents want a "one-stop-shop" for information about programs or services for their children.
- When asked about the most important issues facing children and families in our community, parents keyed into the some of the same issues our community leaders struggle with; child abuse, drug abuse, violence and poverty.

Project Methodology

One Voice for Volusia staff coordinated the Parent PERSPECTIVE project, with the assistance of volunteers from the coalition's member agencies. The project consisted of two key data-collection methods: parent focus groups and parent surveys. The focus group format and parent survey were developed by a One Voice ad-hoc committee. Volunteer facilitators were trained by staff to conduct the focus groups and many member agencies helped distribute surveys.

Target Population and Sample Size

One Voice was interested in communicating with parents in Volusia County (213,255 parents, Census 2000.) Based on a confidence level of 95% and a statistical precision of +/- 4%, a desired target sample size of 599 parents was established. One Voice intentionally recruited parent participants in an attempt to engage parents from various areas of the county, socio-economic levels, race, gender and ethnicities.

Originally, One Voice for Volusia hoped to meet this desired sample size through the parent focus groups. However, the project coordinator and volunteers found that it was very difficult to schedule enough parent focus groups to meet this number in the time available. In an attempt to still gather information from a valid sample of the targeted population, One Voice decided to focus on distributing the parent surveys throughout the community. During the project over 4,000 surveys were circulated. Completed surveys were collected from the 155 focus group participants and an additional 408 community members for a total of 563 survey respondents (36 short of the goal number.)

Focus Groups

One Voice for Volusia relied on existing groups of parents to function as the focus group participants. These parent groups were identified by members of the coalition and other local organizations who served as "sponsors" for the focus groups. Twelve organizations sponsored focus groups and a total of 155 parents participated in this component of the project. Each focus group was facilitated by a trained volunteer facilitator, accompanied by a volunteer recorder. All facilitators were provided with a script to encourage uniformity in the process. Each focus group participant also completed a parent survey prior to the start of the focus group discussions.

The focus group script focused on three key questions:

1. What kinds of information would you, or other parents you know, need to know to successfully raise your children in our community?
2. Where do you, or other parents you know, go to find information about programs, services or activities for your children?
3. What types of barriers or problems have you encountered when trying to access programs, services, resources, or activities for your children?

Limitations of the Focus Group Component

There were several notable limitations to the Parent PERSPECTIVE focus group component including:

- Variations in focus group facilitation and note taking: Although all focus group facilitators were trained and provided with a script, each individual's technique and experience level was unique.

- Size of some focus groups: Although the focus group process was designed to consist of groups of 8-10 parents, some groups were larger or smaller. This affected the level of participation.
- Parent groups: While there are many organizations that work with parents and existing parent groups throughout the community, it was difficult to gain access to many groups. Numerous unsuccessful attempts were made to schedule focus groups with faith based groups, Parent Teacher Associations (PTA), Parent Teacher Student Associations (PTSA), mom groups, etc. Also noted was the lack of parent involvement in organizations designed to work with parents in a formal setting. It became evident that a parent's time is very limited.
- Focus group make-up: Because One Voice for Volusia had utilized existing groups of parents, the familiarity of the participants to each other could have some impact on their willingness to share ideas, thoughts and feelings. The agencies who sponsored focus groups selected the parents who participated in each group. The sample size was limited by the number of the parents who participated in each particular program.

Parent Surveys

One Voice for Volusia encountered difficulty in identifying existing groups of parents who were willing to serve as focus group participants. Based on the desired sample size of 599 parents, One Voice decided to disseminate the surveys to as many parents as possible to collect information from a larger and more representative group of Volusia County parents. Over 4,000 surveys were distributed through a variety of venues including:

- child care providers
- pediatricians' offices
- libraries
- churches
- Cubs baseball game
- during youth sports practices at local YMCAs
- back-to-school events in Volusia County Schools

155 parent surveys were completed by focus group participants and an additional 408 surveys were completed through the community-wide survey distribution.

Limitations of the Parent Survey Component

One Voice for Volusia did not include questions in the survey to control for potential exaggeration or dishonesty. One Voice also did not eliminate surveys where questions were incorrectly answered (i.e. more than one response was given when only one was requested) or questions were left unanswered. Because this survey was developed locally for this particular purpose, the questions have not been tested for validity or reliability.

Confidentiality

One Voice for Volusia took great care to maintain participant confidentiality. The participants did not provide their full names during the focus groups. Findings are presented in this report in aggregate form by total group, gender, and geographic area. No individual participant data was included in the final report.

Focus Group Component & Findings

Parent Focus groups were conducted throughout Volusia County from January 2006 through May 2006. A total of 155 parents participated in 12 different focus groups. This section provides a summary of the information collected by the focus group facilitators.

Information Parents Need

When asked about the kinds of information parents need to successfully raise children in Volusia County, many participants shared the need for accurate and timely information about:

- Tutoring in public schools
- Affordable health insurance
- Affordable after school programs and recreation programs
- Affordable and safe child care
- Respite care or short term child care
- How different organizations and systems work
- Parenting classes and life skills

Many of the parents reported that information is not easy to access and suggested that information about community resources and programs be contained in one resource book that could be found at many public places, including schools and child care centers.

Facilitators found that focus group participants who were raising children with special needs (learning disability, mental health diagnosis etc.) had more sophisticated information needs. Many of these parents shared the need for information related to:

- What type of services does each organization provide?
- What are the referral processes?
- What are the costs to receiving services? Do they accept insurance, KidCare, Medicaid/Medicare, etc?
- Is there a waiting period?

Where Do Parents Go For Help Or Information?

Most focus group participants cited their child's school or their child care provider as the primary source of information about programs, services or activities for their children.

What Barriers Do Parent Experience?

The focus group participants were very vocal when responding to this issue. They were able to share specific problems that they had personally experienced when trying to access programs, services, resources, or information about activities for their children. The majority of the participants in the focus groups reported **customer service** as the biggest barrier to accessing services. Issues that were noted that related to customer service include:

- Poor treatment by the agency staff they encountered
- Lack of knowledge of the agency staff they talked with (how/where to direct a customer for appropriate services)
- Language barriers and lack of good communication skills
- High staff turnover

Another notable barrier reported by the participants was the lack of affordable services or programs for children including: child care, summer and after school programs and after-hour child care. When the topic of affordability of services arose in focus groups, the groups often discussed the “low wages and high costs of living” in our community.

Other areas the respondents indicated as barriers or problems when they were trying to access programs, services, resources, or activities for children were:

- Inadequate public transportation
- Cost of health insurance and/or process to obtain Medicaid or KidCare
- Physicians not accepting some insurance
- Lack of specialized physicians locally
- Inadequate service capacity and long waiting lists
- Lack of a comprehensive community resource directory

Facilitator Notes

One Voice asked each facilitator to share a summary of their impressions and thoughts after conducting their focus groups. Below are some excerpts from their comments.

- All the groups seem to have communication as a real barrier--they didn't know what services were available in the community, how to access those services and what specific service was offered by each provider.
- Many of the parents lack the education and the knowledge necessary to search for the resources they need to help them raise their children.
- Regardless of their geographic location and economic status, parent concerns are generally the same. They want safer neighborhoods for their children, better child care and educational programs for all ages and better wages so that they might be able to provide better for their children without any assistance.
- Parents need easier access to persons who can help them and not just the “run-around.”
- I was not surprised to hear again that access to up-to-date community information and resources remains a challenge for families.

Parent Survey Component & Findings

Through the Parent Focus groups and survey distribution in the community, One Voice received a total of 563 completed surveys. Below is a summary of some of the data collected through these surveys. Detailed tables and charts can be found beginning on page 12, including demographic information and survey question responses. Detailed survey information or question responses tabulated by various demographics (race, gender, marital status etc.) is available upon request.

- Most parents seek information or guidance from their friends or family. Church and schools/child care providers also consistently ranked in the top five responses as a key source of information for local parents.
- Most parents (86.1%) report reading the materials sent home from their child's child care provider or school.
- 70% of parents state they have access to the internet at home, and 15% of parents get information about raising their kids from the internet.
- 93% of the respondents were radio listeners.
- 55% of the respondents read more than one newspaper.

PARENT PERSPECTIVE SURVEY
Please Tell Us About Yourself — Your Answers are Anonymous
DO NOT WRITE YOUR NAME ANYWHERE ON THIS QUESTIONNAIRE

ABOUT YOU

I am a... Parent Step Parent Grandparent raising my grandchild(ren)
 Guardian for a relative's Child(ren) Foster Parent Other

I am raising child(ren) with... My spouse By myself Significant Other Other Household
 I share custody with someone else

My Marital Status Married Single Divorced Widowed
 Separated Significant Other/Not Married Other

In what city do you live? _____ What is your zip code? _____
 In what county do you work? _____ How long (in minutes) is your drive to work? _____

What is your educational level? Some High School High School Diploma/GED Some College
 Associates Degree Bachelors Degree Graduate Degree or higher

Your Race/Ethnicity White/Anglo-American/Caucasian Black/African/African-American Hispanic/Latino/Mexican-American
 Asian/Asian-American Native American/American Indian Other

Your Gender Male Female Your Age _____

ABOUT YOUR FAMILY

Total Household Income Less than \$15,000 \$15,000 to \$29,999 \$30,000 to \$49,999 \$50,000 to \$79,999
 \$80,000 to \$149,999 \$150,000 to \$249,999 \$250,000 to \$499,999 \$500,000 or more

Please list the age(s) of the children you are raising _____
 Where does your family live? House/Condo/Townhouse you own House/Condo/Townhouse you rent Apartment Other

In which of the following are your child(ren) involved? (please check all that apply)

Child Care, in your home Child Care, outside of your home
 Public School Private School
 School club (like the math club, science club, music club, etc.) School sport (like baseball, basketball, soccer, etc.)
 Community recreation (YMCA, PAL, City Parks and Rec, etc.) Community club (like scouts, Boys and Girls Clubs, etc.)
 After school program, at school After school program, not at school
 Religious group (like a church youth group, etc.) Part-time job
 Volunteer activities (food kitchens, nursing homes, etc.) Other

Top Five Responses, by Race/Ethnicity, to: <i>"What are the most important issues affecting children & families in our community?"</i>			
	White/Anglo-American/ Caucasian	Black/African/ African-American	Hispanic/Latino/ Mexican-American
Child Abuse	#1	#2	#1
Drug Abuse	#2	#1	#3
Loss of Family Values	#3	#4	
Poor Parenting	#4	#5	#2
Domestic Violence	#5		
Lack of Education		#3	
Inadequate support for low-income families who work			#4
Lack of programs and services			#5

What's next?

Where do we go from here? One Voice for Volusia hopes this report has provided insight into the perspective of our community's parents. The coalition will share this report with community leaders, elected officials, business owners, educators, human service professionals, and citizens in hope that it will serve as a valuable resource in their work to support and effectively communicate with parents.

One Voice staff, volunteers and leadership are happy to share more information or address any questions you may have regarding the report. If you are interested in getting involved in this project, please contact the One Voice for Volusia office for more information.

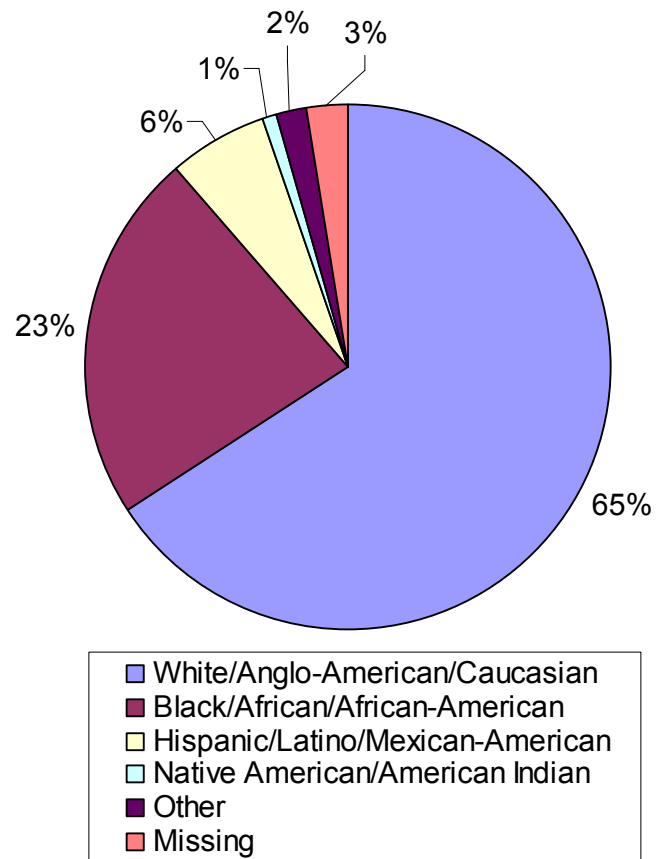
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Demographic Information, Focus Group Participants Only

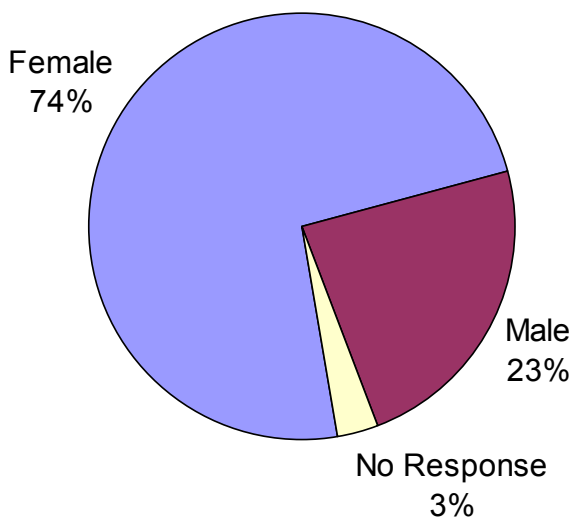
(155 Total Participants)

Participants' Home	
Daytona Beach	20.6%
Port Orange	19.4%
Deltona	15.5%
Edgewater	11.0%
DeLand	9.7%
Ormond Beach	6.5%
Holly Hill	5.2%
New Smyrna Beach	4.5%
Out of Area	1.9%
South Daytona	1.3%
DeLeon Springs	1.3%
Seville	1.3%
Orange City	0.6%
Debary	0.6%
No Response	0.6%

Participants' Race/Ethnicity



Participants' Gender

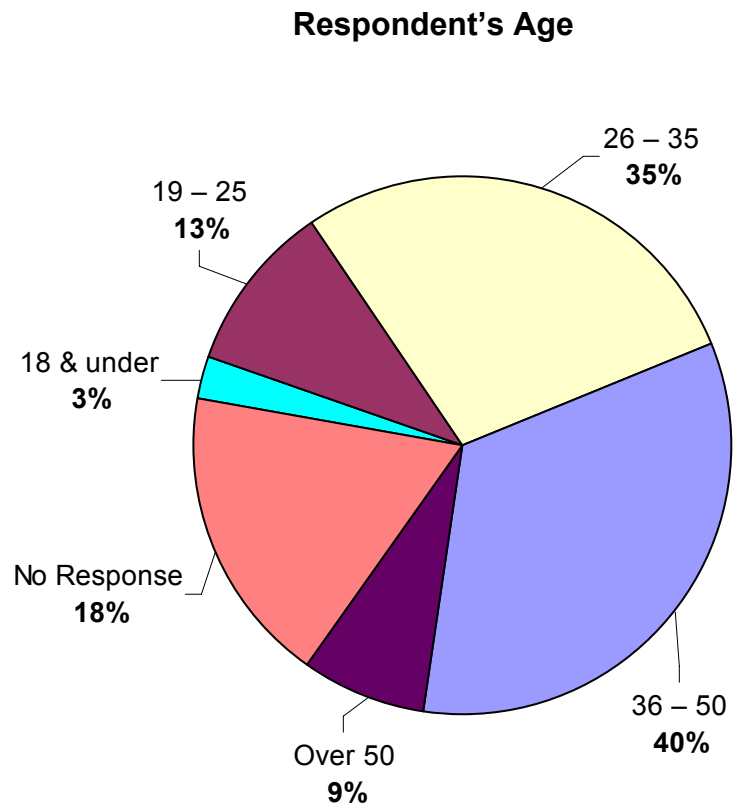


Participants' Household Income	
Less than \$15,000	22.6%
\$15,000 to \$29,999	25.8%
\$30,000 to \$45,999	12.3%
\$50,000 to \$59,999	7.7%
\$60,000 to \$74,999	7.7%
\$75,000 to \$89,000	6.5%
\$90,000 to \$104,999	4.5%
\$105,000 or more	3.2%
No Response	9.70%

Demographic Information, All Survey Respondents

(563 Total Respondents, including focus group participants)

Respondents' Home	
Daytona Beach	19.5%
Port Orange	16.5%
DeLand	15.8%
Deltona	12.8%
Ormond Beach	7.8%
Edgewater	6.4%
New Smyrna Beach	3.7%
Holly Hill	3.6%
Debary	3.0%
South Daytona	2.3%
Orange City	1.4%
DeLeon Springs	1.1%
Oak Hill	0.9%
Seville	0.4%
Lake Helen	0.2%
Out of Area	4.1%
No Response	0.5%



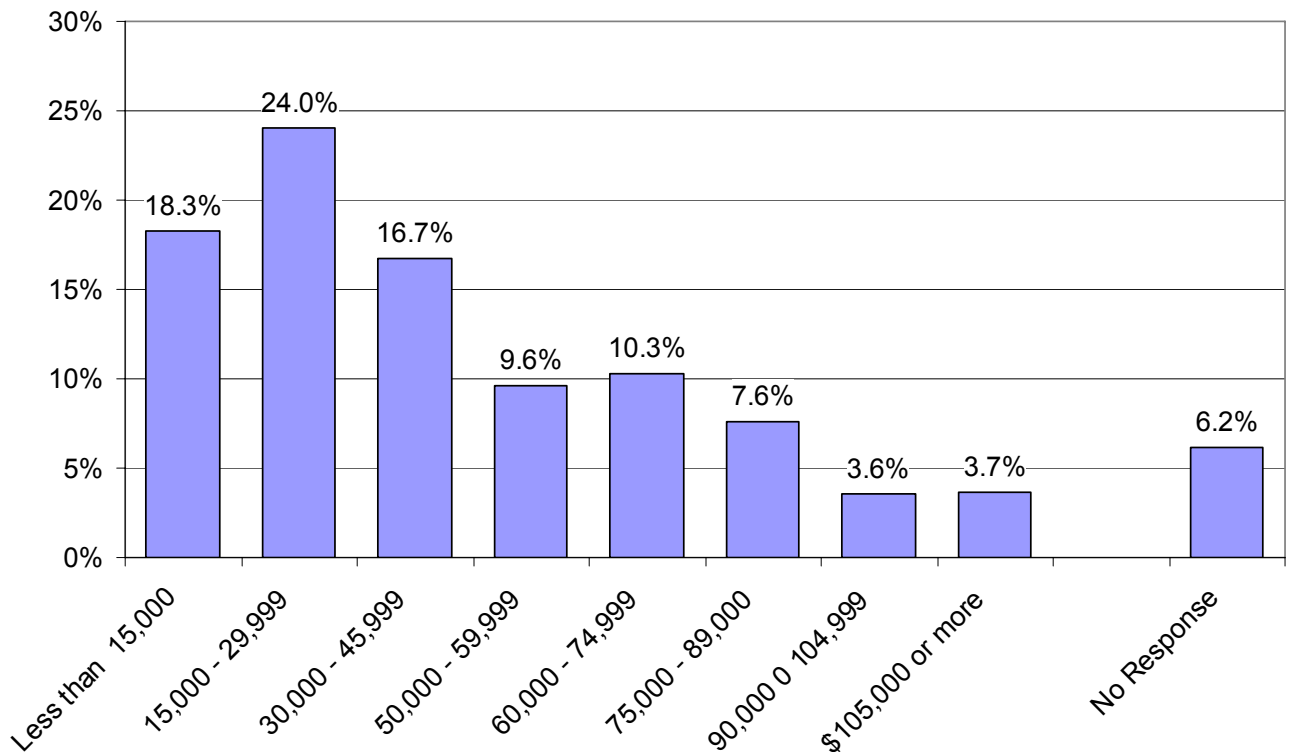
Respondents' Race/Ethnicity	
White/Anglo-American/Caucasian	65.4%
Black/African/African-American	21.3%
Hispanic/Latino/Mexican-American	8.5%
Asian/Asian-American	1.4%
Native American/American Indian	0.7%
Other	1.4%
No Response	1.2%

More Demographic Information, All Survey Respondents

Number of Children Respondent is Raising	
1 Child	35.1%
2 Children	31.8%
3 Children	16.6%
4 Children	5.8%
5 Children	2.6%
6 Children	1.3%
8 Children	0.6%
No Response	6.2%

Respondents' Marital Status	
Married	54.0%
Single	18.1%
Divorced	11.2%
Significant Other/Not Married	8.5%
Separated	3.7%
Widowed	2.5%
Other	0.4%
No Response	1.6%

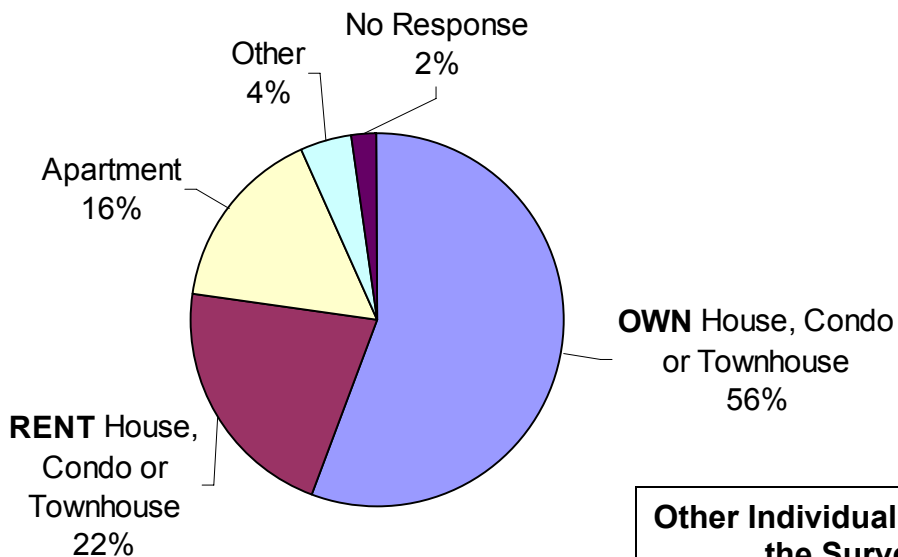
Respondent's Reported Household Income



More Demographic Information, All Survey Respondents

Respondents' Education Level		
	Male Respondents	Female Respondents
Some High School	13.9%	9.0%
High School/GED	23.8%	23.9%
Some College	25.7%	26.4%
Associates Degree	9.9%	12.8%
Bachelors Degree	13.9%	15.5%
Graduate Degree or Higher	10.9%	10.1%
No Response	2.0%	2.3%

Respondent's Living Situation



Other Individual Raising Children with the Survey Respondent	
Spouse	55.4%
Self (no one else)	23.3%
Significant Other	9.4%
Other Friend/Relative	4.4%
Share Custody	4.3%
No Response	3.2%

Survey Responses to Key Questions

Where do you get information about raising your children?

Top Five Responses	
Friends/Family	#1 (76%)
Medical Professionals	#2 (40%)
Books	#3 (28%)
Child Care Provider or School	#4 (25%)
Church	#5 (22%)

Where do you get information about programs, services or activities for your children?

Top Five Responses	
Friends/Family	#1 (71%)
Child Care Provider or School	#2 (42%)
Newspaper	#3 (32%)
Church	#4 (19%)
Internet	#5 (19%)

Do you read information sent home by your child's school and/or child care provider?

Yes: 86.1% No: 9.4% (No Response: 4.4%)

Does your pediatrician provide you with child rearing information or resources?

Yes: 69.4% No: 22.4% (No Response: 8.2%)

More Survey Responses to Key Questions

Where do you access the Internet?

Home	70%
Work	8%
Don't Access the Internet	8%
Friend's Home	6%
Library	4%
Other	4%

To what radio stations do you listen?

101.9, WJHM	20%
103.3, WVYB	18%
94.5, WCFB	18%
105.1, WOMX	15%
106.7, WXXL	13%
95.7, WKNG	12%
93.1, WKRO	12%
99.9, WFKS	5%
91.5, WAPN	5%
AM Stations	5%
Don't listen to radio station	7%

Do you use the library?

Yes: 80.1% No: 18.3% (No Response: 1.6%)

More Survey Responses to Key Questions

Do you watch WCEU or other local cable television channels?

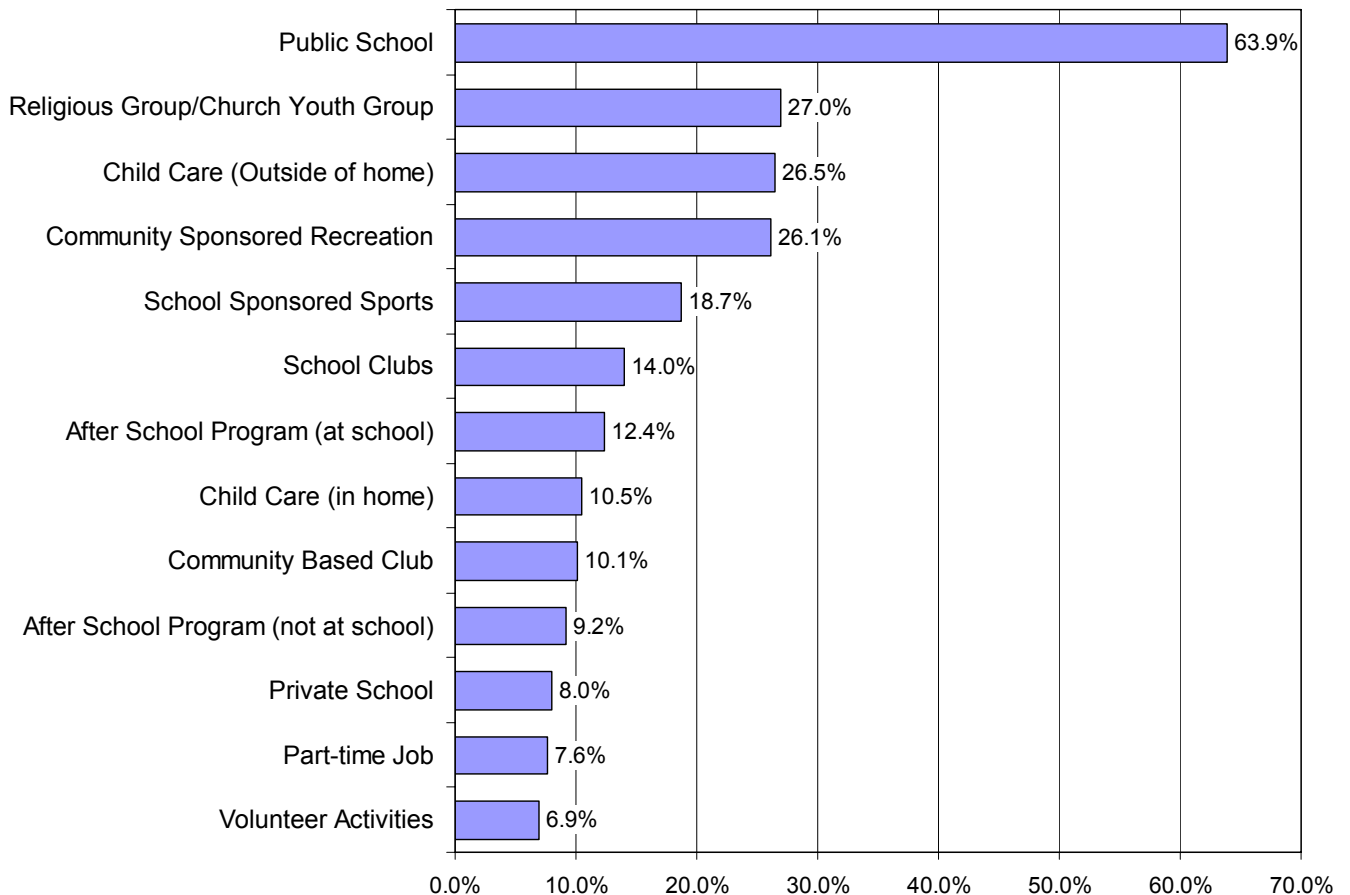
Yes: 67.7% No: 28.8% (No Response: 3.6%)

Are you a member of the PTA or similar organization?*

Yes: 28.4% No: 67.3% (No Response: 4.3%)

*
note: the no responses would include those respondents that do not have school age children

In what activites are your children involved?



More Survey Responses to Key Questions

What are the most important issues affecting children and families in our community?

Top Concerns	
Child Abuse	51%
Drug Abuse	46%
A Loss of Family Values	44%
Poor Parenting	41%
Domestic Violence	38%
Lack Of Education	37%
Inadequate Support For Low-Income Families Who Work	36%
Poverty	36%
Tolerance of Violence	35%
Illiteracy	34%
Alcoholism	34%
Individual's Lack of Self-Discipline	31%