

August 2009

Early Childhood Needs Assessment: Results & Recommendations

Guam Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities Education, Research, & Service (Guam CEDDERS)
for Guam Parent Information Resource Center (PIRC)

Volume I, Issue I



TIPS & STRATEGIES ON:

- Information
- Training Opportunities
- Collaborative Opportunities
- Communication



A SNAPSHOT

- **73%** of the parents are highly satisfied with information
- **65%** of the parents are highly satisfied with communication
- **58%** of the parents are highly satisfied with collaborative opportunities
- **45%** of the parents are highly satisfied with training opportunities



The Early Childhood Needs Assessment

Guam Parent Information Resource Center (PIRC) is determined to strengthen parent involvement in their children's schooling from the beginning.

To do this, PIRC held a focus group meeting with DREAM Advisory Council members on July 7, 2009 to identify what family members need "To Care, To Communicate, To Collaborate Consistently" with early childhood settings.

A resulting survey asked parents how satisfied they were with information, communication, collaborative opportunities, and training opportunities in early childhood programs.

Surveys were distributed to the 47 child care centers across the island. Surveys were also mailed to 31 family care providers.

In January, surveys will be distributed to Head Start, Guam Early Intervention Services, and other preschool programs throughout the Department of Education.

The January date for these programs is to allow time for the families to experience the programs, which varies from child care providers who provide services continuously throughout the summer.

This document summarizes the results of 32% of the child care centers, as well as recommended tips and strategies that may strengthen each area.

Issue II of this report will be developed after surveys are collected from the DOE early childhood programs.

The Survey Items: What Parents Need To Be Involved

Parental satisfaction was assessed on the following items:

Information: Parents are well informed about the center's/school's rules, regulations, schedules, personnel, and program.



Communication: Communication with the center/school is two-way, timely, and respectful.



Collaborative Opportunities: Parents are asked for input on center/school decisions that influence practices, programs, and policies.

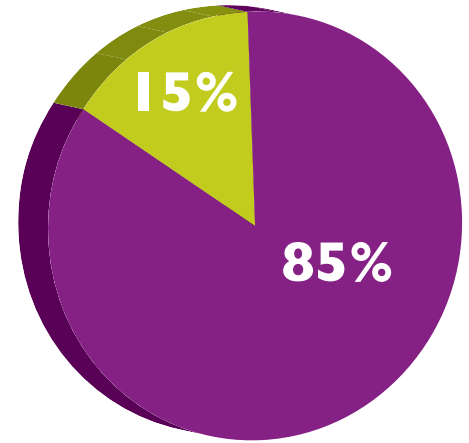


Training Opportunities: Training opportunities are accessible for parents on issues.





Early Childhood Needs Assessment on INFORMATION: “I am well informed about the center’s/school’s rules, regulations, schedules, personnel, and programs.”



Tips & Strategies that Keep Families Informed

- Handbooks that are updated with complete information about rules, regulations, names, and positions of all staff members.
- A website that is updated with contact information.
- Schedules that are posted in walkways.
- A bulletin board where parents know to look for the latest information.
- Flyers that announce new programs, policies, and procedures.
- Newsletters that highlight updates and accomplishments.
- A center/school calendar that posts all dates, times, sites, and other needed information and that is distributed in a timely manner.
- Weekly bulletins that provide updated information.

Highly Satisfied: 85%

Updated information is received on a regular basis and is trustworthy.

Satisfied: 15%

Information comes once in awhile and is trustworthy.

Not Satisfied: 0%

I always have to call asking for information and, many times, nobody knows the answer.

Note: Percentages are based on 110 properly completed surveys.

Receiving correct information on a timely basis helps parents to be organized and use their time wisely.

Knowing what, who, when, where, and why helps families know which step to take.

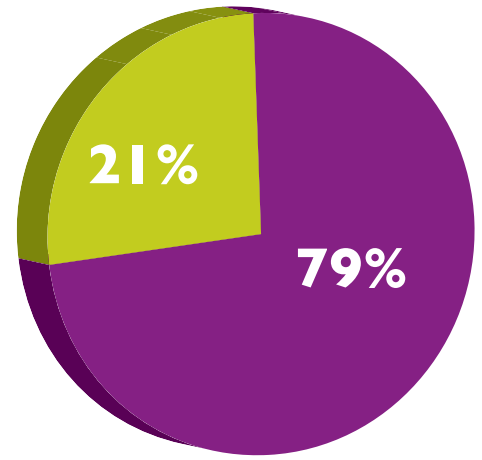




Early Childhood Needs Assessment on COMMUNICATION: “Communication with the center/school is two-way, timely, and respectful.”

Tips & Strategies that Better Communication

- Communication Logs or School Planners that travel back and forth from home to school and school to home on a daily basis keeps information current. The child gets a smiley face every time the parent initials the entry.
- Telephone Trees, where parents are identified to make calls to identified sets of families especially during sudden changes.
- An Open Door Policy for parents to access school personnel is friendly and supportive.
- Interactive websites, where families and teachers can post comments.
- Information posted in the Education Update sections of the *Pacific Daily News* or the *Marianas Variety*.
- Responses that are constructive, focused, and supportive. This means that if an issue is a problem, that the response tries to resolve the problem, that the response is focused on the problem, and that the response takes into consideration what the family and the teacher is going through.
- Updated information about who should be contacted at home and at school helps keep conversations respectful.



Highly Satisfied: 79%

Two-way communication is continuous, encouraged, and respectful.

Satisfied: 21%

Communication occurs regularly and is respectful.

Not Satisfied: 0%

Communication occurs only when the school/center personnel want to share information.

Note: Percentages are based on 105 properly completed surveys.



Knowing what happens at school and what happens at home helps the child grow and learn—both at home and at school!

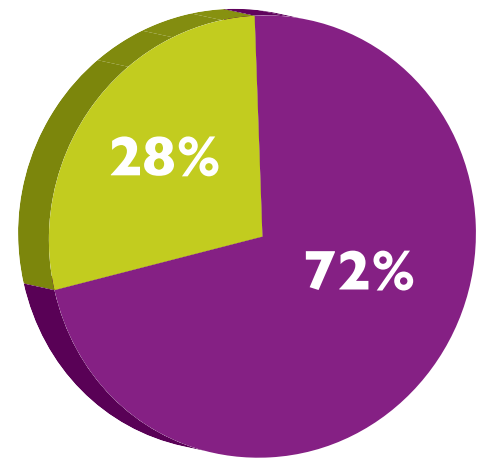


Early Childhood Needs Assessment on **COLLABORATIVE OPPORTUNITIES:**

“Parents are asked for input on center/school decisions that influence practices, programs, and policies.”

Tips & Strategies that Increase Collaborative Opportunities

- An Open House at the beginning of the year that welcomes families and shows them where their child will be spending their time.
- A Family Night where families and teachers and staff can share moments of pride through stories, song, dance, and art work.
- An Intergenerational Project where grandparents and senior citizens throughout the community visit the center/classroom to teach the children songs, dances, crafts like weaving, or share stories of the islands.
- A policy that states that families will be asked for input as programs and practices are being changed, introduced, or deleted.
- A policy that clearly describes the steps to be followed when disagreements arise.
- Surveys that ask parents to rate their satisfaction level of information, communication, collaborative opportunities, and training opportunities. Results are then used to improve information, communication, collaborative opportunities, and training opportunities.
- A Suggestion Box where family and staff can place comments, thoughts, and observations for directors to know, consider, and reflect upon.
- Transition meetings between families and receiving schools when children are moving to new schools/centers.



Highly Satisfied: 72%

Parents are asked for input on center/school decisions that influence practices, programs, and policies.

Satisfied: 28%

Parents are given an opportunity to provide input once in awhile on decisions that impact their child's learning.

Not Satisfied: 0%

Parents are not given an opportunity to provide input on decisions that impact their child's learning.

Note: Percentages are based on 104 properly completed surveys.





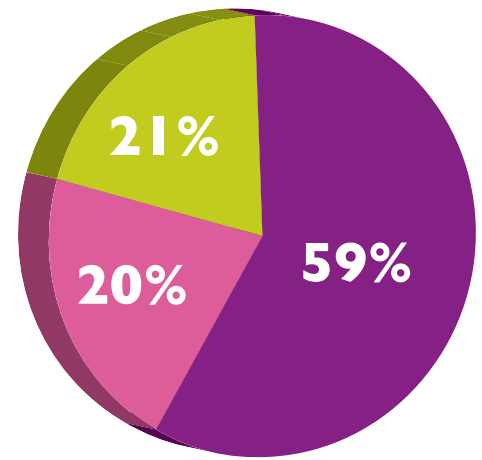
Early Childhood Needs Assessment on **TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES:**

“Training opportunities are accessible for parents on issues that will enhance their parenting skills.”

Tips & Strategies that Increase Training Opportunities

- Survey parents on topics they would like to receive training on.
- Partner with other centers/schools to provide training.
- Request the Guam Early Learning Council to provide updates of island-wide events for families and young children.
- Work with the Guam Child Care Development Association, the Guam Community College, and the University of Guam to provide training sessions for family members.
- Post notices of training opportunities received from the Guam Department of Public Health Social Services, Guam Parent Information Resource Center, the Guam Department of Education, and other relevant providers.

Exploring, reflecting, and sharing—there’s always something to learn!



Highly Satisfied: 59%

Training Opportunities that are determined by parent needs are offered on a regular basis and in a variety of ways.

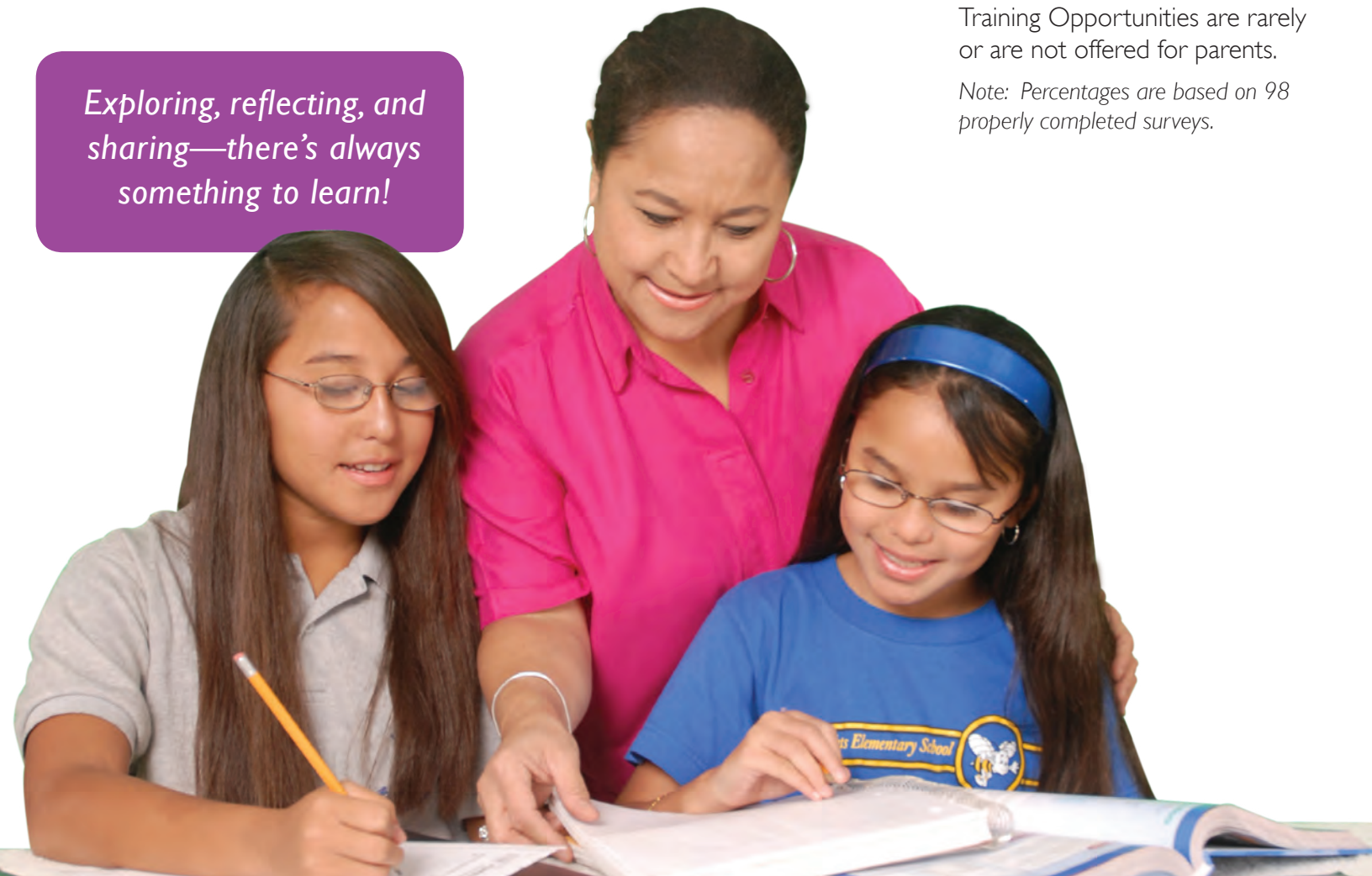
Satisfied: 21%

Training Opportunities that are determined solely by staff/school are offered on a regular basis.

Not Satisfied: 20%

Training Opportunities are rarely or are not offered for parents.

Note: Percentages are based on 98 properly completed surveys.





VISION:

To Care, To Communicate, To Collaborate...Consistently.

The Vision – To Care, To Communicate, To Collaborate Consistently – was crafted by 200 stakeholders from across the island in October 25, 2008.

Parents, teachers, grandparents, mayors, students, care providers, counselors, principals, the attorney general, policy makers, and community leaders crafted this vision in response to “What is the ideal situation for families and schools to work together for their children?” After scanning our environment, identifying strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, the group that dedicated their Saturday to envisioning what families needed to work effectively and efficiently with schools, determined that *caring, communicating, and collaborating consistently by parents and schools is what is needed to be successfully involved in their child’s schooling.*

The Early Childhood Needs Assessment Respondents

The following Child Care Centers returned surveys that provided the data for this report.

- Young Learner Center
- My School Day Care
- Tender Shepherd Child Care Center
- School of Creative Arts Center
- Honey Bear Kids Center
- Amazing Kids Child Development Center
- Noah's Ark Day Care Center
- Kiddy Land Play & Learn Center
- Little One's Child Care Center
- M.G. Huffer Adventures in Learning Child Development Center
- Agat Bay Child Development Center
- Edu's Fun Learning Center
- Harmony Kids Child Care Center
- Good Day Child Learning Center
- Maria Artero Catholic Pre-School

Thank You!!!



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