

Initial Summary

Chaffee County Early Childhood Parent/Guardian Survey

Parents received the parent/guardian survey in March 2008. Respondents were not randomly selected, so results are not necessarily statistically valid. However, respondents appeared to have provided thoughtful responses and written comments. Surveys were distributed and collected at parenting classes, libraries, Head Start, child care centers, licensed child care homes, and preschools. Ninety-three responses were received and are included in this initial summary. The geographic distribution of respondents follows:

- Buena Vista = 26
- Nathrop = 1
- Poncha Springs = 13
- Salida = 50
- West Fremont = 1
- Unknown = 2

All respondents had at least one child age five or under. Of those responding:

- 11 were male and 82 female
- 52 reported being married and 18 single, 1 guardian, 1 grandparent, 10 are living together
- The majority had two children or less, 11 had three children, 2 had four children and 1 had six
- 25 had lived in the area for five years or less, while 21 had lived here nine years or more

Early care and learning:

Do you think there is enough easily accessible high-quality child care available in your area?

For infants

- 16 yes
- 58 no (all BV respondents answered “no” or “don’t know”)

For ages 1-2:

- 15 yes
- 38 no (all BV respondents answered “no” or “don’t know”)

For ages 3-5

- 43 yes
- 28 no

Don’t Know

- 7 (because they don’t use child care and/or are new to the community)

Please explain: The most common written responses reflected that parents found it very difficult to find quality care that is affordable, and that there is a strong need for infant to two care, as existing slots are few and fill up fast. One parent responded that more sites needed that offer financial aid.

Do you use/need child care?

No = 8 (six are stay at home parents and two work different shift than spouse as they can’t afford child care)

If yes, why? Please check all that apply:

- 45 = I work
- 33 = To have a stimulating environment for my child
- 23 = To have a break

How satisfied are you with your current child care?

- 27 = Very Satisfied (over 25% of respondents)
- 11 = Somewhat Satisfied
- 5 = Neutral
- 2 = Somewhat Unsatisfied

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- 4 = Very Unsatisfied

What would make it better?

Responses included;

- One full time place to have my child
- More affordable, accessible, and reliable with flexible hours and a sliding pay scale
- Change curriculum every year and more art programs

Who provides your child's care?

- 5 = an individual comes to our home
- 14 = licensed home care provider
- 20 = center or preschool
- 28 = family or friend

Which of the following do you look for when choosing a child care provider? Check all that apply

- 73 = nurturing and caring
- 70 = clean and safe
- 64 = affordable
- 63 = available the hours I need
- 63 = stimulating learning environment
- 61 = recommended by someone I trust
- 60 = experience and education
- 59 = understands my child's needs
- 56 = developmentally appropriate activities
- 55 = works with me to meet my child's needs
- 42 = close to where I work
- 36 = philosophy or mission
- 2 = other, reliable

Health:

Does your child have health insurance?

- 76 = Yes
- 14 = No

Please check all that apply

- 11 = My child does not regularly see a doctor or health care provider

If your child sees a doctor or health care provider, does he/she talk with you about your child's?

- 64 = immunizations
- 63 = developmental milestones
- 56 = well child care
- 55 = nutrition
- 46 = vision and hearing
- 12 = community resources available to parents and young children

Parent information and family support:

What, if any, aspects of parenting young children would you like to learn more about?

Please check all that apply

- 48 = responding to challenging behavior
- 43 = communication techniques for guiding young children toward self-direction

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- 40 = community resources available to families with young children
- 32 = social and emotional needs of young children
- 27 = health: recommended screenings, exams, and immunizations
- 21 = nutritional needs of infants and young children
- 14 = safety
- 14 = what to expect: infants and toddlers stages of growth and development

How would you like to receive this information? Check all that apply

- 43 = pamphlet
- 31 = class
- 26 = web site
- 18 = video
- 16 = one on one

How would you describe your family's finances?

- 40 = our basic needs are met
- 27 = difficult to meet our basic needs
- 13 = we cover more than the basics
- 8 = very comfortable

As a parent of a young child, what are your most pressing needs? Check all that apply

- 46 = affordable housing
- 44 = stable/adequate year round income
- 39 = affordable quality child care
- 38 = health insurance
- 38 = more quality time with my child
- 19 = a play group for my child
- 18 = extended hours for child care [swing shift, evenings or weekends]
- 17 = a regular weekly schedule, not shift work that changes from week to week
- 16 = list of services available for young families Information
- 15 = specialized services or medical care

Are you planning to stay in our community? Why or why not?

- 67 = yes
- 7 = no
- 2 = undecided

The majority of positive written comments mentioned the community as a great place to raise children, preferring a small town environment, having family here and good schools.

The most common written concerns were related to the high cost of living, low paying jobs, and difficulty finding care for special needs children.