



gre^{At}
EXPECTATIONS

Preparing Forsyth County's Youngest
Children for a *Lifetime of Success*



2016 FORSYTH FAMILY VOICES

SURVEY RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

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Hispanic-ave	\$0-24K-ave	27101-ave
White-ave	\$25-49K-ave	27105-ave
Black-ave	\$50-74K-ave	27106-ave
Total-ave	Total-ave	27107-ave



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15. What 2 or 3 things Forsyth community organizations can do to improve quality of life for those living in your home? (n=293)40

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Q1: Describe the quality of early childhood education in the county. Talk about your experiences.41

Q2: How much of a challenge is it to have an impact on decisions regarding your children’s education at the local (county), regional or state level?42

Q3: How do you stay informed about the services that are available for your child and your family in Forsyth County?43

Q4: What are your ideas about the possibility or opportunity to work with other parents to support each other and improve education programs in Forsyth County for young children?44

Q5: What are the barriers that prevent most parents and guardians to be more active in your child's early childhood education program? Follow up: How do we build early childhood education advocacy leaders among all communities in the county?45

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Hispanic-ave	\$0-24K-ave	27101-ave
White-ave	\$25-49K-ave	27105-ave
Black-ave	\$50-74K-ave	27106-ave
Total-ave	Total-ave	27107-ave



Introduction and Methodology

The goal of *Great Expectations*, a community-wide initiative of [Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust](#), is to ensure that children in Forsyth County reach developmentally-appropriate milestones in the first five years, enter kindergarten ready to learn, and leave set for success in school and life.

During the summer of 2016, [MDC](#), the [activating agency](#) for Great Expectations, contracted with Nolo Consulting, LLC., to lead a process of facilitation and training on a new family engagement process called **Forsyth Family Voices (FFV)**. The overall goal of FFV was to strengthen Forsyth County's early childhood system of services for young children and their families. From May to October 2016, an ongoing family engagement process was designed to assist agencies and programs in Forsyth County that serve families of young children with capturing families' perspectives, interests, and opinions. FFV's ultimate purpose was to authentically seek and incorporate the voices and perspectives of Forsyth County families in program planning and service delivery.

This report provides a summary of the methodology, including the learning opportunities and action steps, established to train participating agencies on the qualitative approaches to collect data; how to best administer parent surveys; and the processes to complete focus group interviews across the county to fully engage diverse families.




From beginning to end, FFV's group activities, data collection tools, event pictures, trainings, data findings, and resources were posted in real-time on the *Great Expectations* web portal for participating agencies to follow and calibrate their programs accordingly throughout the implementation period. The *Great Expectations* portal was also helpful in allowing participating agencies and MDC an opportunity to share feedback in shaping the final version of data collection instruments used.


See link to the portal: <http://www.noloconsulting.com/great-expectations>

Planning/Design Process. During May 2016 our participatory and inclusive process began with the selection of 12 Forsyth County community stakeholder agencies (see list of agencies and annotated profile of each on page 6) in response to the *Great Expectations* request of interest. The array of agencies included public service agencies, non-profits, childcare centers, and community-based organizations. These community stakeholder agencies (with 2-3 representatives each, a total of 36 staff) participated in a working meeting, facilitated by [Nolo Consulting](#), to develop a common set of survey questions, which eventually became the instrument used by agencies to administer the family surveys.

During the first working meeting, Nolo Consulting staff provided relevant baseline data on Forsyth County children and families to encourage a dialogue with participating agencies to examine, among other topics, the needs of Forsyth County families with children under age 6, as well as the community's agencies/services and community assets. This facilitated discussion generated additional data themes and important categories that helped develop a standardized instrument. This survey was used to reach at a minimum 250 families. A copy of the parent survey is included in Appendix A.

During the first participatory work meeting a Nominal Group Technique (NGT) process was used -- a structured variation of a small-group discussion to reach consensus among groups. Using this small group technique provided an opportunity for agency participants to engage in a learn-by-doing process

 Hispanic-ave	 \$0-24K-ave	 27101-ave
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 Black-ave	 \$50-74K-ave	 27106-ave
 Total-ave	 Total-ave	 27107-ave



4

as they followed the steps with other agency participants. The NGT gathered information by asking individuals to respond to questions posed by the facilitator, and then asking participants to prioritize the ideas or suggestions of all group members. There are many benefits to the NGT process, among them: it prevents the domination of the discussion by a single person, encourages all group members to participate, and results in a set of prioritized solutions or recommendations that represent the group's preferences. This group structured process assisted in building consensus around the development of common questions that were used in the parent survey instrument and topics to explore during FFV's implementation period.

Nolo Consulting followed these NGT brainstorming steps with participating agencies to develop the parent survey:

1. Introduction of themes, issues or questions.
2. Silent generation of ideas.
3. Sharing ideas (round-robin process).
4. Group discussion (seek clarity - the process is as neutral as possible, avoiding judgment and criticism).
5. Identification of common categories and themes.
6. Voting and ranking; this involved prioritizing the recorded ideas in relation to the original question.

The cohort of 12 Forsyth County agencies reconvened a week later to review a draft of the parent survey based on feedback collected during the first working meeting. During the second working meeting, agencies sought clarification and meaning of the survey questions and reviewed issues identified during the first gathering. Agencies also received training on how to use standardized and unbiased methods for administering the surveys with families.

The FFV Parent Survey instrument, developed in English and Spanish, was then tested. The purpose of the testing was for agencies to help improve the survey through responses from three (3) families per agency to determine possible question and response errors and survey completion time, prior to collection during the proposed "real" survey period. A total of 37 families completed the pilot survey.

The final parent survey included key topics such as:

1. Parents' knowledge about early childhood education.
2. Parents' preference regarding communication channels and how to stay informed.
3. Parents' involvement in their child(ren)'s education.
4. Parents' confidence about supporting their child(ren)'s education.
5. Parents' barriers and challenges.
6. Poverty related questions.
7. Access and quality of early childhood education in the county.
8. Quality of life and priority needs.
9. Demographic data questions.

Six of the 12 participating agencies accepted additional responsibilities and received training to conduct parent focus groups. The focus groups increased the number of opportunities to engage families to receive additional input, provide a broader range of information, and offer an opportunity to clarify findings from earlier parent survey results. Before conducting parent focus groups, Nolo Consulting provided agencies training on the "dos and don'ts," see Appendix B. Each participating agency used the standard Focus Group questionnaire, which is included in Appendix C.

Focus groups were hosted and conducted during August and September 2016. Staff from MDC and Nolo Consulting observed the focus groups' interviews, providing modeling and coaching to agency staff as needed. The agencies and staff that completed successful focus group interviews included:

1. [Smart Start of Forsyth County](#), Jackie Lofton
2. [Work Family Resource Center](#), Donna Bell
3. [Family Services](#), Shonna Trinidad
4. [Imprints Cares](#), Trina Stephens
5. [Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools, Title I Parent Involvement](#), Sharon Frazier
6. [Forsyth County Department of Social Services](#), Tanya McDougal

During the final session on October 13, 2016, which included over 50 participants representing FFV agencies and families, Nolo Consulting presented a full analysis of responses and findings that included key statements from focus group respondents; lessons learned about the FFV process; and information about resources that will help agencies maintain enduring connections and relationships with parents and key stakeholders. At the meeting, agencies had an opportunity to collectively review findings and further query parents for insight and clarification regarding responses and experiences. A total of 307 parents responded to the parent survey, and over 50 parents participated in six focus group interview sessions.

Agency	Agency Type	APPLICATION RESPONSE: <i>Why is your organization interested in participating in this opportunity to develop and administer a shared approach to family engagement? What knowledge or experience do you think your organization can share to benefit other participants, and what do you hope to gain from the experience?</i>
Church Childcare Center, Inc.	Religious-sponsored child care	We are interested in participating in this opportunity to give us training and the ability to increase our current methods of family engagement. We know parents are the primary caregivers and we want to work as a team to improve family engagement within the community by making them aware of local resources to meet their child's needs.
El Buen Pastor Latino Community Services	Religious-sponsored non-profit that partners with Latino families to equip children and adults to fulfill their educational and economic potential, with hope for a positive and healthy future	We believe it is important for the unique experience and voice of this immigrant population to be included in community approaches that are being developed to support family engagement. We know that obstacles for these families are great, but so are strengths and factors of resilience, so our hope is that the greater Winston-Salem community will benefit from the inclusion of this population.
Family Services	Non-profit organization providing professional services that foster the development of children, advance the safety, security, and success of families and individuals, and help build a sustainable community	As an organization whose focus is on engaging families to support successful children, we are looking forward to learning the most effective ways to engage families. Our goal is to have each family leave the program both ready for school and life. Based on federal regulations, there is information that we must provide to our families to ensure that our families are school-ready. We are faced with the question: "How can we get families involved and present information to them as effectively as possible?" We have attempted to answer this question by a variety of survey tactics and through trial and error. What we have found to be the most effective method is hosting child-centered events and beginning the events with information to support families with finance needs, health, safety, nutrition, stress management, resume writing, GED classes, etc. and embed the information throughout our activities. Although we gained insight on effective family engagement via surveys and trial and error. We would like to learn more about what families are asking for and how to best meet our families' needs and make the information-sharing process as available as possible. We already know what skills make families successful based on research, but would like to learn more about how we can support each family in their journey to having a successful family.

■ Hispanic-ave	■ \$0-24K-ave	■ 27101-ave
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MDC Great Expectations: 2016 Forsyth Family Voices Survey Results and Analysis
Introduction and Methodology

Agency	Agency Type	APPLICATION RESPONSE: <i>Why is your organization interested in participating in this opportunity to develop and administer a shared approach to family engagement? What knowledge or experience do you think your organization can share to benefit other participants, and what do you hope to gain from the experience?</i>
Forsyth County Department of Social Services	Public services agency	FCDDS is interested in participating in this opportunity because it is part of our mission to engage within the community and support families through collaboration with other community partners. We can bring program knowledge and social work experience that may provide support and assistance to families. Our organization benefits from this opportunity of working in a different approach to serve families.
Generations Preschool and Childcare Inc.	Private, for-profit child care	The Technical Trainers/Coaches of Generations (Val Smith and Manita Broaddus), are both recent graduates of the University of North Carolina Wilmington currently holding a Master’s Degree with a concentration in Leadership, Policy and Advocacy in Early Childhood Education. We both concluded our Masters’ program by executing separate Culminating Projects which articulated the benefits of Parent Engagement as children matriculated from Early Education Programs, forward. During our extensive research, both Val and I became cognizant of the evidence which proves that an increase of Parent Engagement opportunities provided the children with not only the groundwork of early learning experiences, but experiences which would be the foundation of lifelong learning successes. The concepts learned through our research and oral presentations strengthened our convictions of the importance of getting parents engaged or more involved with not only their children’s learning, but their lives as well.
Imprints Cares	Non-profit providing child and family direct services	As stated earlier, Imprints Cares has been partnering with families for over 40 years and sharing a common tool or approach to family engagement has been a long-time goal for our agency and for North Carolina. While there are some shared best practices, there hasn’t been a consistent common tool. Having a shared approach or tool will help build positive interactions, fidelity to family engagement, and shared outcomes. Because of the trusting relationships we have built with our families, Imprints Cares can bring families to the table and gather them for meetings and focus groups. They are willing to open up and tell their truths. I believe having Imprints Cares involved in this Family Engagement process with Great Expectations will benefit our agency, the community, and families.
Neighbors for Better Neighborhoods	Public non-profit	NBN is a public non-profit organization, created in 1991 by the Winston-Salem Foundation. The organization is dedicated to connecting people, strengthening voices, and leveraging resources with community to create safe, just, and self-determined neighborhoods. NBN uses an asset-based community development approach in its work. We work with residents/families to help them become more engaged in their neighborhoods and to lead initiatives that impact those neighborhoods. We help build trusting relationships between residents and institutions that are serving or desire to serve those neighborhoods emphasizing "doing with" rather than "doing for." We can help other participants make this distinction and help them understand the ABCD approach. We hope to continue helping neighborhoods leverage resources that help improve their neighborhoods.
Smart Start of Forsyth Co, Inc.	Non-profit providing collaborative programs, consumer education, and advocacy with families, providers, and policy-makers	SSFC recognizes that parents are the first and most important teachers in a child’s life. It is our mission to provide tools, training, resources, and leadership to help families help our children thrive. SSFC is the only entity charged by state statute to care about early care and learning, and we accomplish our mission through our programs and partnerships within the community. Our involvement with The Forsyth Promise (TFP) is an example of how we work in the community to help build a high quality, affordable system of early care and learning. SSFC staff members are actively engaged in the three Collaborative Action Networks (CANs): Transitions, Professional Development, and Parent Education and Support, and serve on the TFP Executive Committee. Through our participation, we can help identify where gaps exist in resources for families, and forge partnerships to address those gaps. With over 20 years of experience, SSFC has established a reputation in the community as the expert in early childhood development and learning. Our highly skilled staff provide guidance and training to families on the importance of being involved in their child’s growth and development during the early years. By participating in the Great Expectations Family Engagement opportunity, we hope to work collaboratively with other participants to address the following: 1) What do families need from us to help them engage with, and on behalf of, their children? 2)What are the barriers to engagement? 3)How can we and our community partners better align services and processes for families?; and 4) How do we measure ourselves to ensure we are improving parent

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■	Total-ave	■	Total-ave	■	27107-ave



MDC Great Expectations: 2016 Forsyth Family Voices Survey Results and Analysis
Participating Agencies

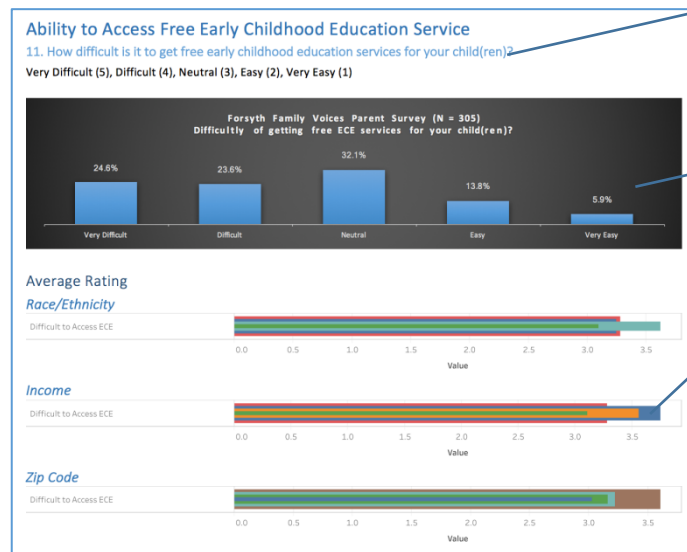
Agency	Agency Type	APPLICATION RESPONSE: <i>Why is your organization interested in participating in this opportunity to develop and administer a shared approach to family engagement? What knowledge or experience do you think your organization can share to benefit other participants, and what do you hope to gain from the experience?</i>
		engagement? Most importantly, we hope that our participation in this opportunity will help our community live into the reality that early childhood matters, and that by changing the first five years, we change everything.
The Centers for Exceptional Children	Partnership between WS/FC Schools, United Way and Smart Start	Engaging families is critical to strengthening families. Our population is unique and often is left out of the education conversation. Because our staff are also family members of children with special needs there is a deep respect for the parent's experience. We do not tell families what to do, we help them make the best and most informed choice for their unique situation. We would also welcome the opportunity to learn from other programs who are participating.
The Salvation Army of Greater Winston-Salem	Religious-sponsored non-profit whose mission is to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ and to meet human needs in His name without discrimination	We recognize that it takes the entire community to ensure that our citizens' needs are met and no single organization can provide all the answers. We must partner with other organizations, and through those collaborative efforts numerous individual and family needs are met and our community benefits. We want to participate for two important reasons. The first is to gain insight into the effectiveness of our programs and services to meet our goals and our client's needs through direct input from them. Secondly, to support and learn from other agencies that would be partnering in this effort. We bring almost 100 years of experience on strategies and tactics that succeeded and/or failed and we want to share that knowledge. The world is rapidly changing and we need to learn from other organizations that are blazing new trails. Please consider our organization for participation so we can meet both of those goals.
Winston-Salem / Forsyth County Schools [Title I Parent Involvement program Project Hope program]	School District	WS/FCS is interested in participating in this opportunity to build greater capacity for our students, their families, and our schools to achieve our vision of providing the best possible education for every child in Winston-Salem and Forsyth County. I feel that this experience will help us to improve current parent involvement policies and practices, and make the shift to authentic, culturally sensitive, and purposeful engagement, vs. status quo, casual involvement. The collaborative opportunities, connections, and training offered as a part of this experience will provide much needed support and collective impact to all entities and persons who touch the lives of our children from birth to 6 years old. In my opinion, the impact of this experience will help to create a stronger awareness and stakeholder ownership around the utility and importance of building and maintaining a bridge between home, school, and community. I hope that one result of this first-stage experience will be a common toolkit for collecting and analyzing parent/family input and feedback that can be used by all stakeholders. Finally, I hope that this experience will lead to systemic change and a conceptual framework of engagement for our community and school district that sets high standards of accountability for comprehensively and consistently engaging the diverse range of families that grow, learn, and live in Winston-Salem/Forsyth County. Project HOPE is interested in the shared approach to learn more about how we can interact with our families in a positive and encouraging way. We are interested in any professional development that can assist our staff in becoming better at what we do. Since we work with parents/students daily we can only benefit from learning a new approach to helping the families with are servicing. Project HOPE staff can provide others with our experiences on how we engage with our families and how we work toward getting them more involved in their child's education and advocating for themselves when seeking community support from the local agencies.
Work Family Resource Center	Private, 501(c)3 non-profit child care resource and referral agency committed to providing consumer education, child care referrals and resources to support quality child care	Work Family Resource Center understands that this effort will provide insight from families receiving services in our community that will help us and other agencies better meet their needs. A consistent process of listening to families, which is used across service agencies, will ensure that families' voices are included in determining what, how, when and where services are provided. By developing and implementing a tool and a process to uniformly gather input from families, our agency and others in the community will have the input we need to make continuous improvements in our services to ensure that we act as partners with families. WFRC has worked with diverse families across our community for the past 25 years. Doing so has provided insights into the many challenges families face in accessing services from transportation, work schedules, child care, and gathering necessary documentation. We also see the strong desire of families to be heard and to know that the person they are talking with has a caring attitude.

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■	Total-ave	■	Total-ave	■	27107-ave



Participating Agencies

What is the name of the agency that asked you to complete this family/parent survey?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Church Childcare Center, Inc.	8.2%	25
El Buen Pastor Latino Community Services	4.2%	13
Family Services of Forsyth County	8.2%	25
Forsyth County Department of Social Services	8.8%	27
Generations Preschool and Childcare Inc.	8.2%	25
Imprints Cares	8.5%	26
Neighbors for Better Neighborhoods	8.5%	26
Smart Start of Forsyth Co, Inc.	8.5%	26
The Centers for Exceptional Children	8.2%	25
The Salvation Army of Greater Winston-Salem	8.2%	25
Work Family Resource Center	5.9%	18
WSFCS		
[Title I Parent Involvement program Project Hope program]	14.7%	45
	answered question	306
	skipped question	1



All answers to the survey questions are given a weighted value. Rating scales and values are displayed below the survey question on each page.

The first graph (typically a black bar or column chart) illustrates the way the group [as a whole] responded to the question.

Focus on the color of the bar (legend in footer of each page) and where the bar ends (average rating of answer).

Answers to each question are analyzed and illustrated based on the total group as well as the respondents' race/ethnicity, income level and residence or zip code.

For example, on a scale of 1 (very easy) to 5 (very difficult), white respondents found that getting free ECE services was a little higher than a 3.5.

Respondents in the 27107 zip code found that access to free ECE service was more difficult than respondents in the 27101 zip code.

Interpreting the Data

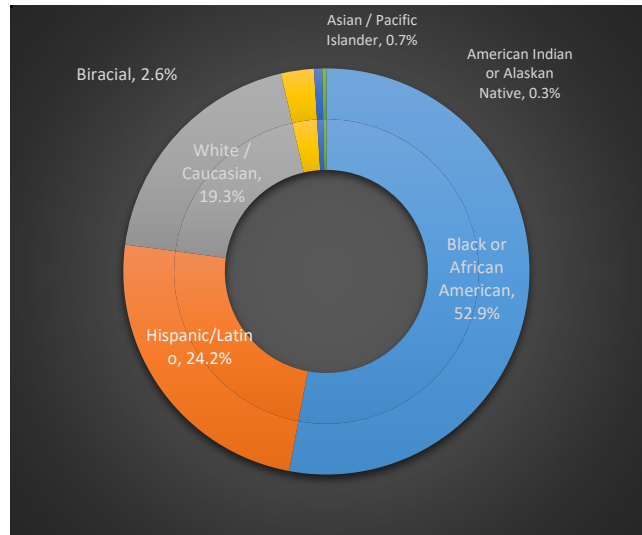
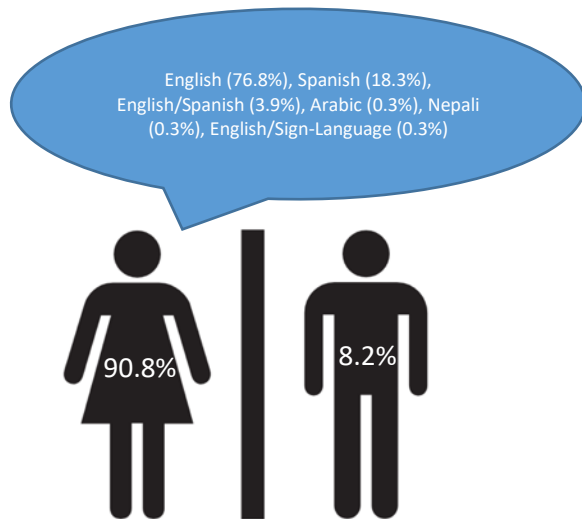
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Characteristics of Survey Respondents

Race/Ethnicity and Language

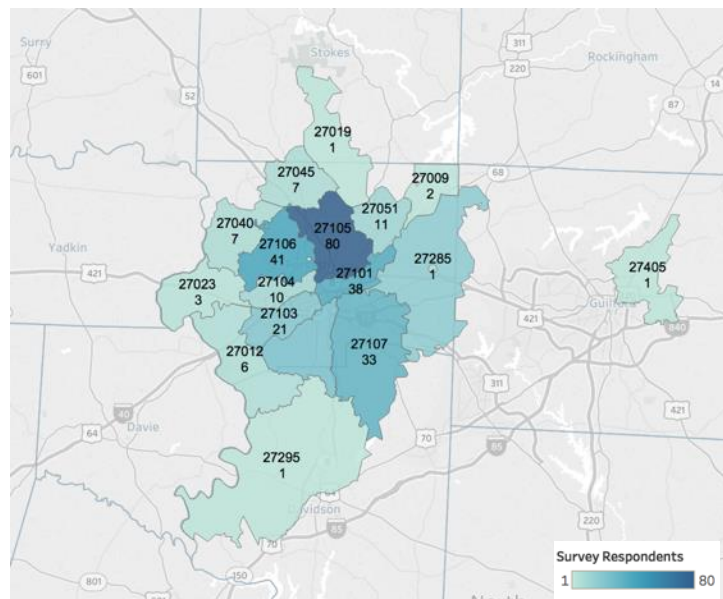
The overwhelming majority of survey respondents were females (90.8 percent). Approximately 3 out of 4 speak English as their primary language (76.8 percent) and roughly one-fifth speak Spanish (18.3 percent). More than half of survey respondents were black/African American (52.9 percent), approximately one-quarter were Hispanic/Latino (24.2 percent), one in five were white/Caucasian (19.3 percent) and 2.6 percent were biracial.



Most surveys were collected from families living in the 27105 zip code area (26.2 percent) followed by 27106 (13.4 percent), 27101 (12.5 percent) and 27107 (10.8 percent).

Zip Codes	Total	Percent
27105	80	26.2%
27106	41	13.4%
27101	38	12.5%
27107	33	10.8%
27127	24	7.9%
27103	21	6.9%
27284	17	5.6%
27051	11	3.6%
27104	10	3.3%
27040	7	2.3%
27045	7	2.3%
27012	6	2.0%
27023	3	1.0%
27009	2	0.7%
20471*	1	0.3%
27019	1	0.3%
27285	1	0.3%
27295	1	0.3%
27405	1	0.3%

*Zip code in Mexico



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Children

Most survey respondents have children under the age of 6 (98.4 percent), a total of 380 children. Over half of those who responded to the question indicated having children above the age of 7 (53.9 percent), a total of 216 children.

Do you have children in your home < the age of 6?			Do you have children 7 years old or older?		
Answer Options	Response %	Response Count	Answer Options	Response %	Response Count
Yes	98.4%	301	Yes	53.9%	164
No	1.6%	5	No	46.1%	140
If yes, please list how many...		380	If yes, please list how many...		216
answered question		306	answered question		304
skipped question		1	skipped question		3

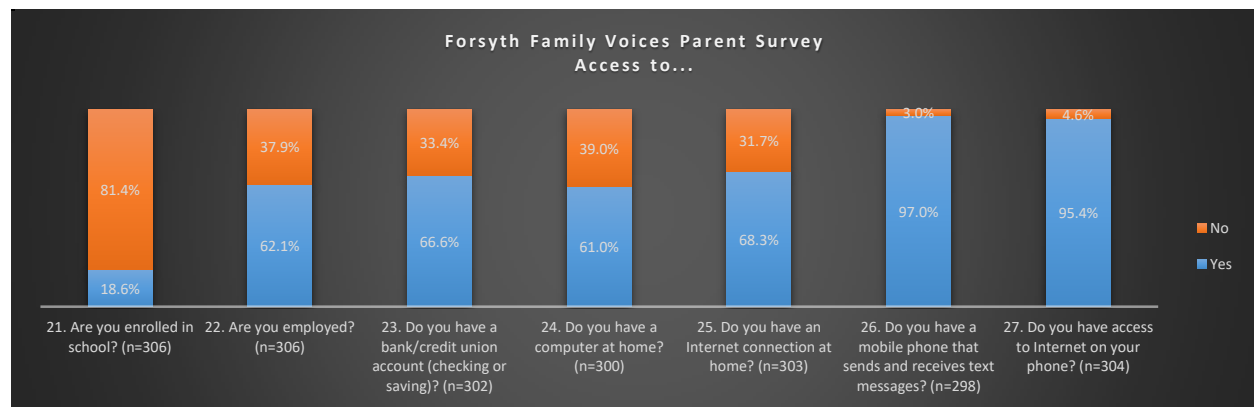
Income

Approximately two out of three survey respondents indicated their total combined household income is less than \$25,000 per year (61.4 percent). One in five earned and/or received a total income between \$25,000 - \$49,999 per year.

About how much total combined money do adults in your home earn or receive from other sources each year?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
\$0-\$24,999	61.4%	183
\$25,000-\$49,999	20.1%	60
\$50,000-\$74,999	8.1%	24
\$75,000-\$99,999	6.4%	19
\$100,000 and over	4.0%	12
answered question	298	
skipped question	9	

Access to Education, Employment, Communication and Financial Resources

Less than one in five respondents are enrolled in school (18.6 percent), approximately two-thirds are employed (62.1 percent) and two-thirds have a bank or credit union account (66.6 percent). Between 61 and 68.3 percent of respondents have a computer and/or an internet connection at home. The overwhelming majority have a mobile phone with text capability (97.0 percent) and access to internet on their phone (over 95 percent).



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MDC Great Expectations: 2016 Forsyth Family Voices Survey Results and Analysis

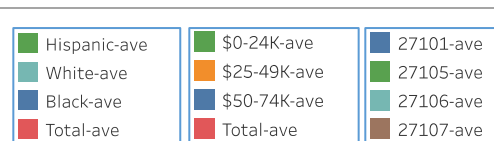
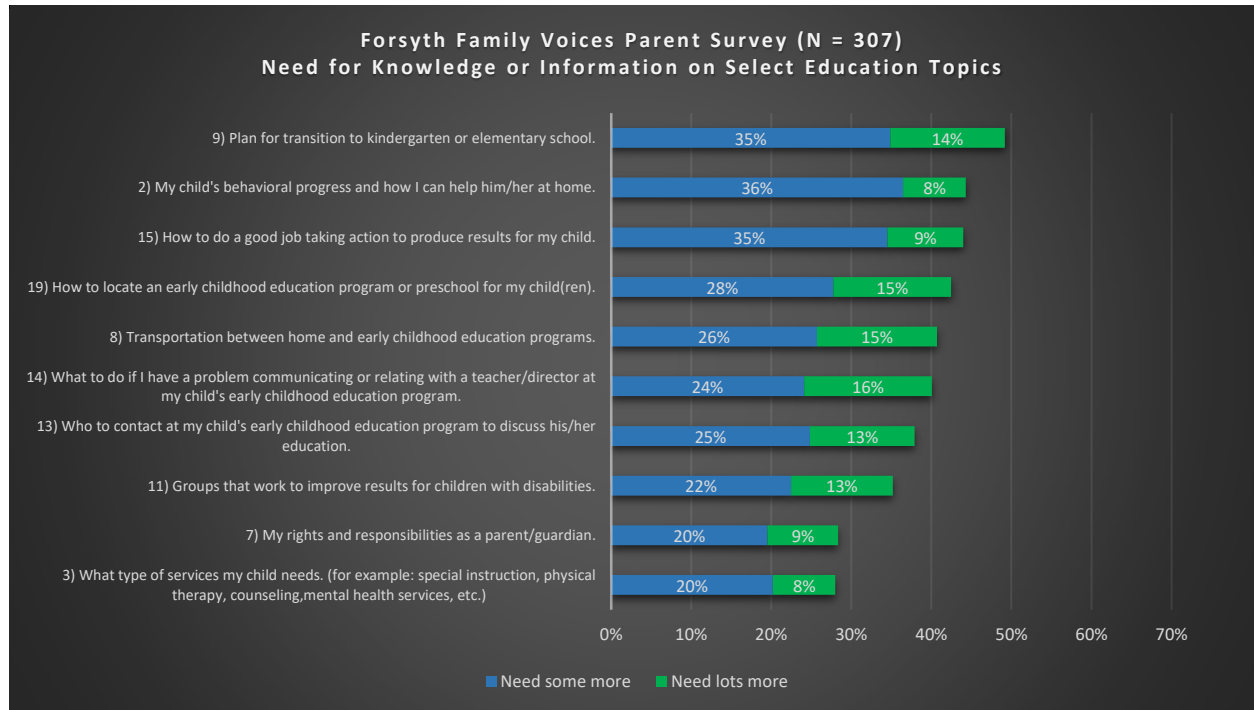
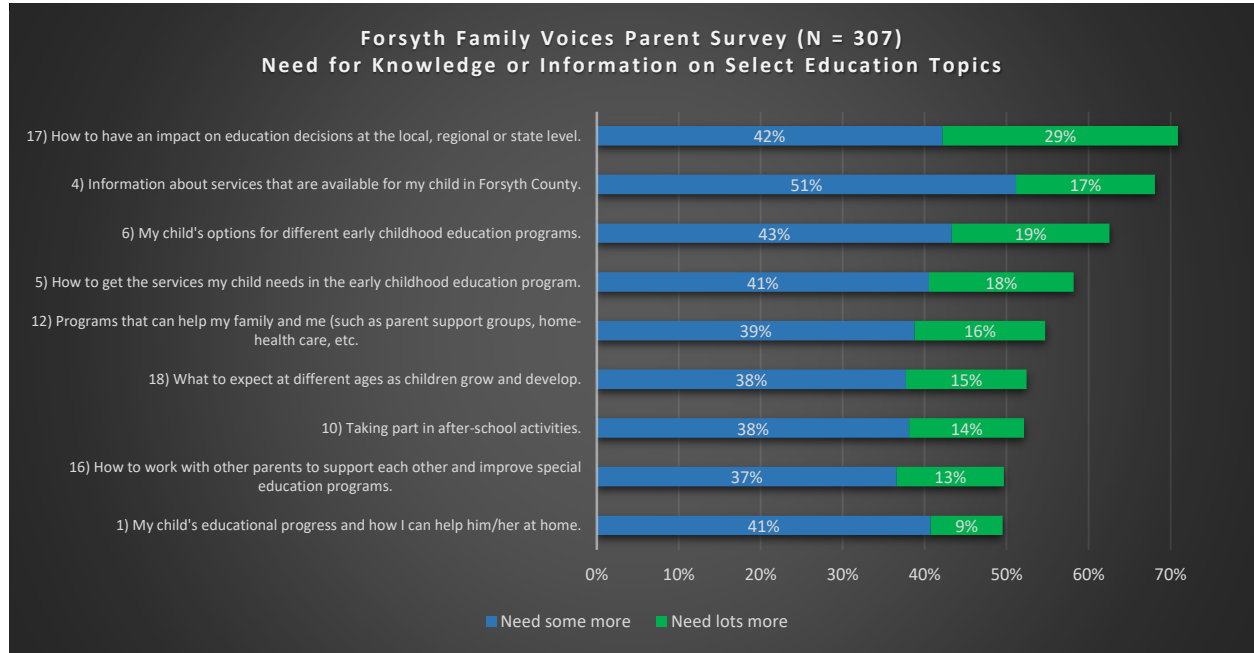
Need for Knowledge or Information

1. Please rate how much you know about the education topics listed below using the following scale:
Have enough knowledge (1), Need some more (2), Need lots more (3), N/A (0)

Need for Knowledge or Information

1. Please rate how much you know about the education topics listed below using the following scale:

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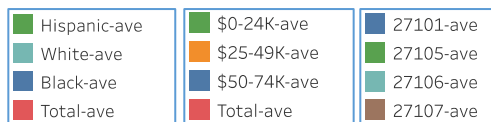
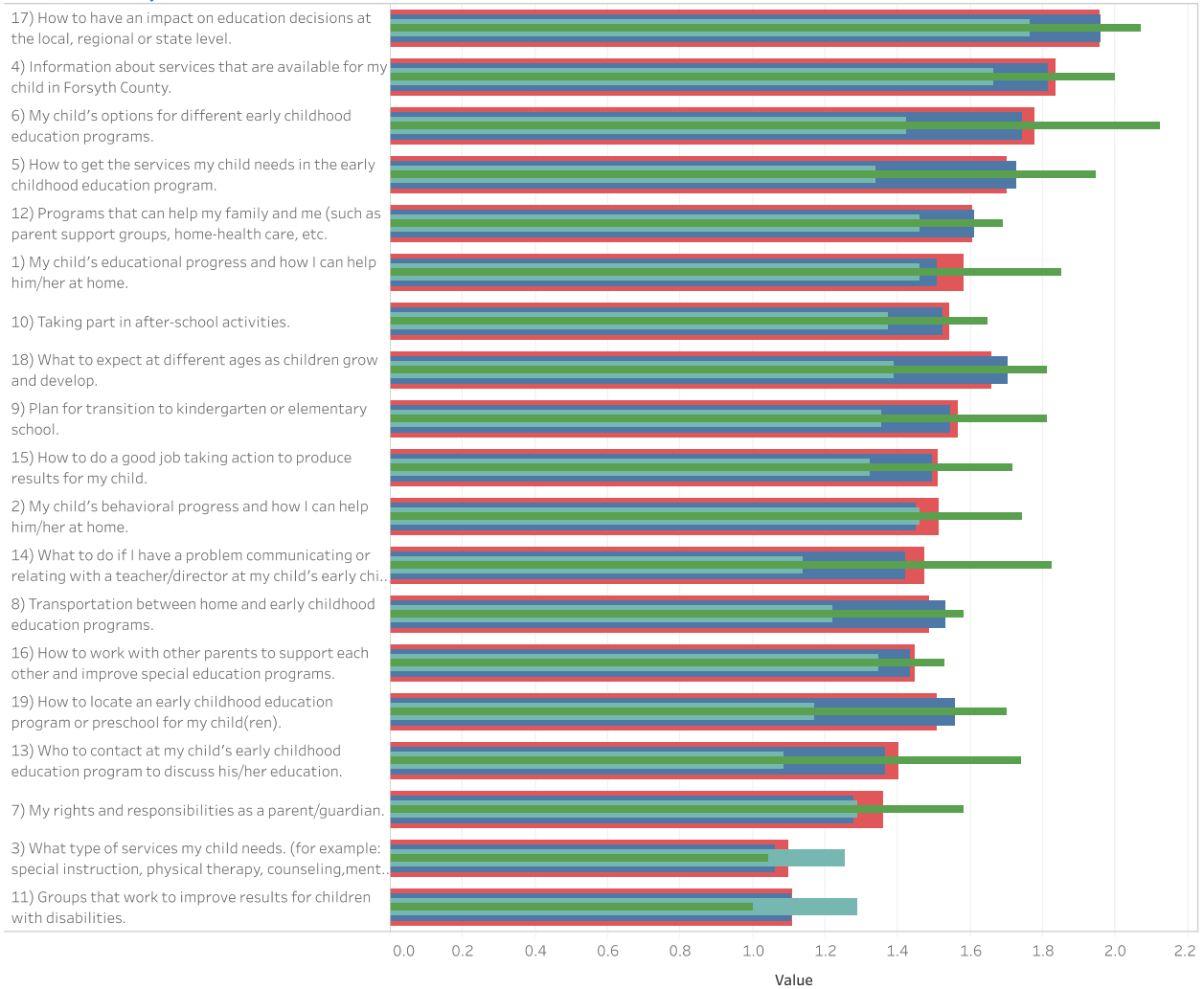


Need for Knowledge or Information

1. Please rate how much you know about the education topics listed below using the following scale:
Have enough knowledge (1), Need some more (2), Need lots more (3), N/A (0)

Average Rating

Race/Ethnicity

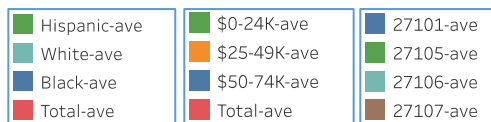


MDC Great Expectations: 2016 Forsyth Family Voices Survey Results and Analysis

Need for Knowledge or Information

1. Please rate how much you know about the education topics listed below using the following scale:
Have enough knowledge (1), Need some more (2), Need lots more (3), N/A (0)

Income

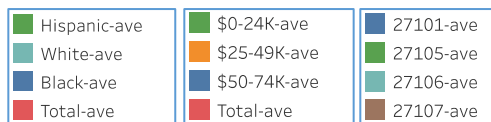
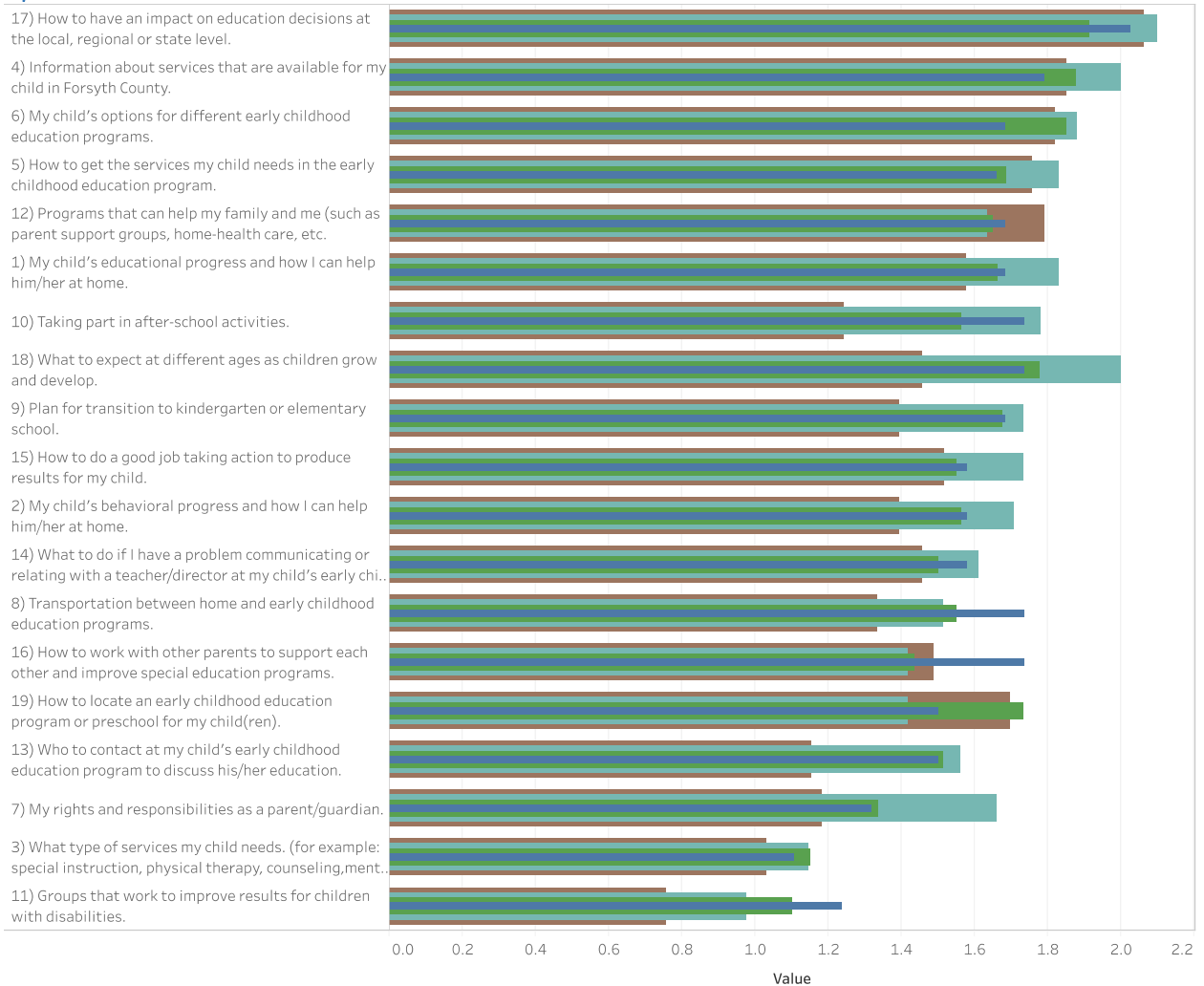


MDC Great Expectations: 2016 Forsyth Family Voices Survey Results and Analysis

Need for Knowledge or Information

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Zip Code



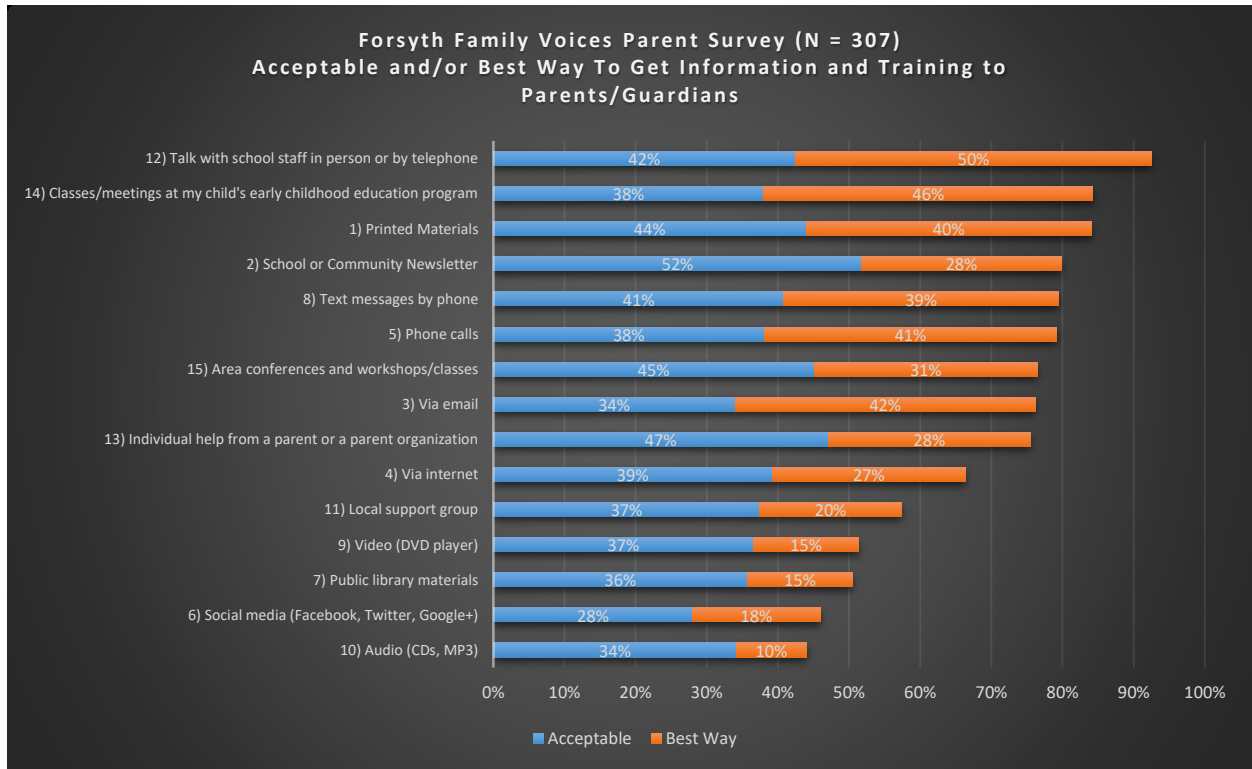
Receiving Information and Training

2. Following is a list of a few ways of getting information and training to parents/guardians. If all of these options were available, please show your preference using the following scale:
 Not a preference (1), Neutral (2), Acceptable (3), Best Way (4)

Receiving Information and Training

2. Following is a list of a few ways of getting information and training to parents/guardians. If all of these options were available, please show your preference using the following scale:

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Hispanic-ave	\$0-24K-ave	27101-ave
White-ave	\$25-49K-ave	27105-ave
Black-ave	\$50-74K-ave	27106-ave
Total-ave	Total-ave	27107-ave

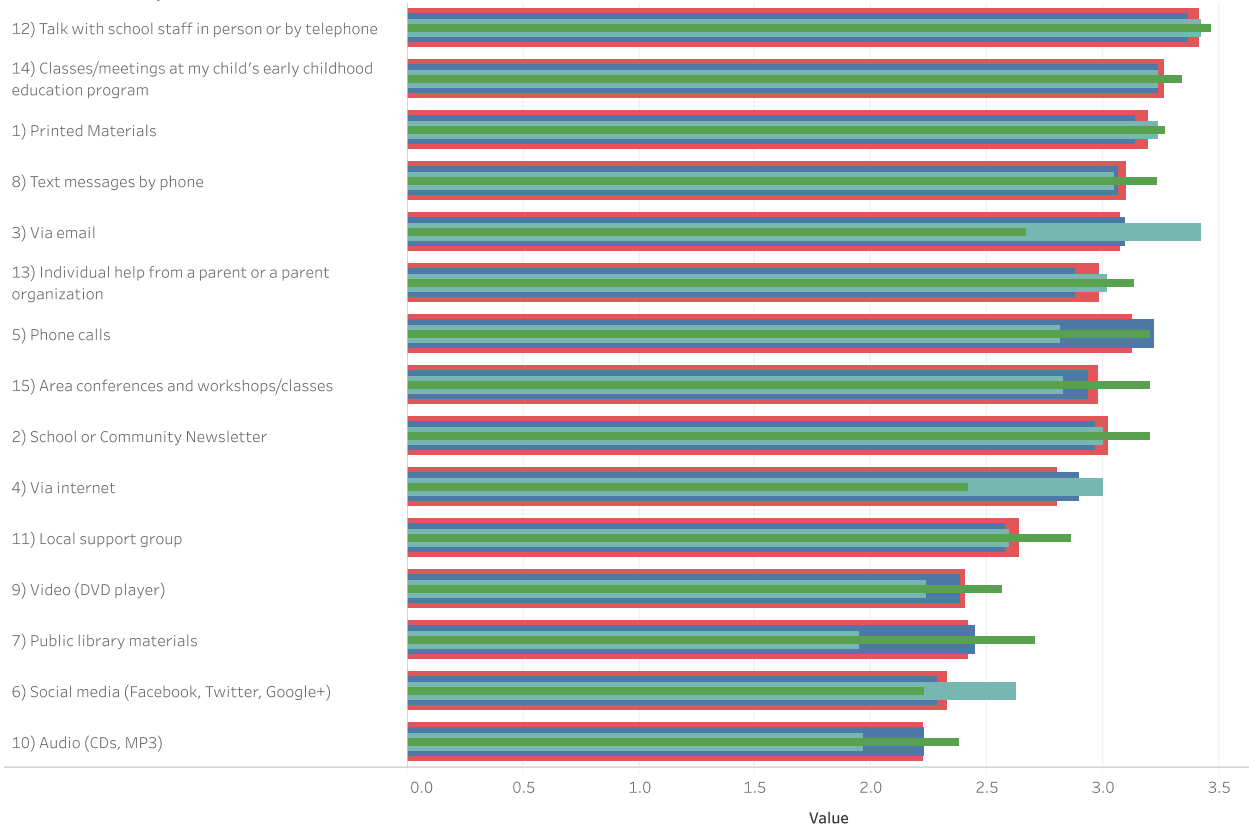


Receiving Information and Training

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Average Rating

Race/Ethnicity



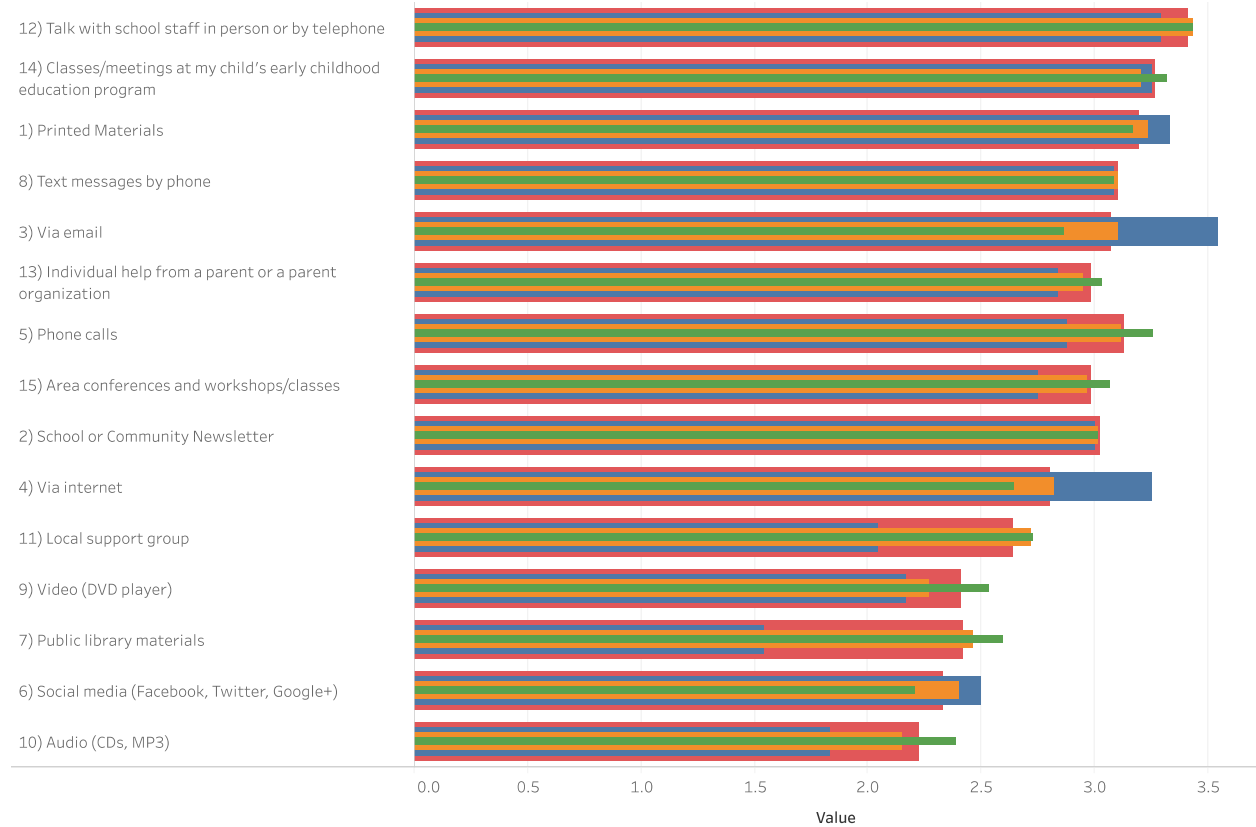
Hispanic-ave	\$0-24K-ave	27101-ave
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Income



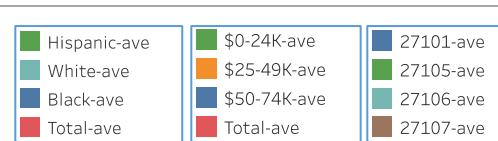
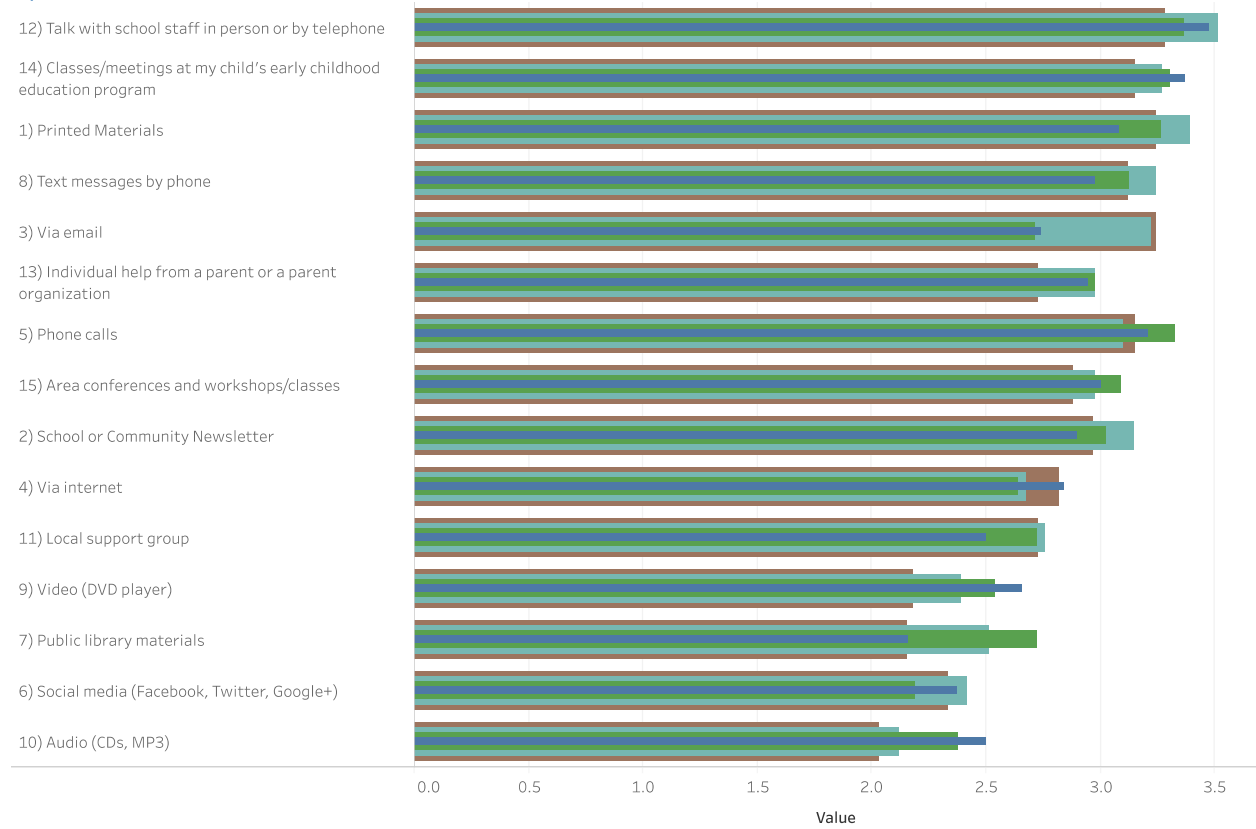
Hispanic-ave	\$0-24K-ave	27101-ave
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Zip Code



MDC Great Expectations: 2016 Forsyth Family Voices Survey Results and Analysis

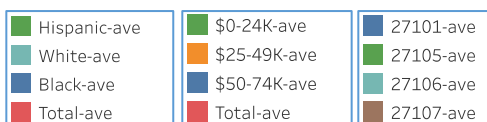
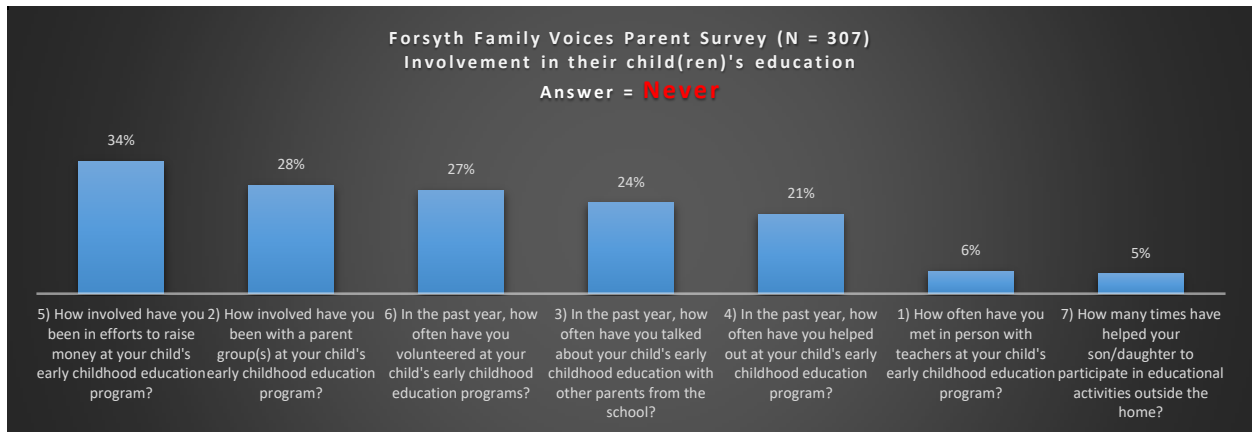
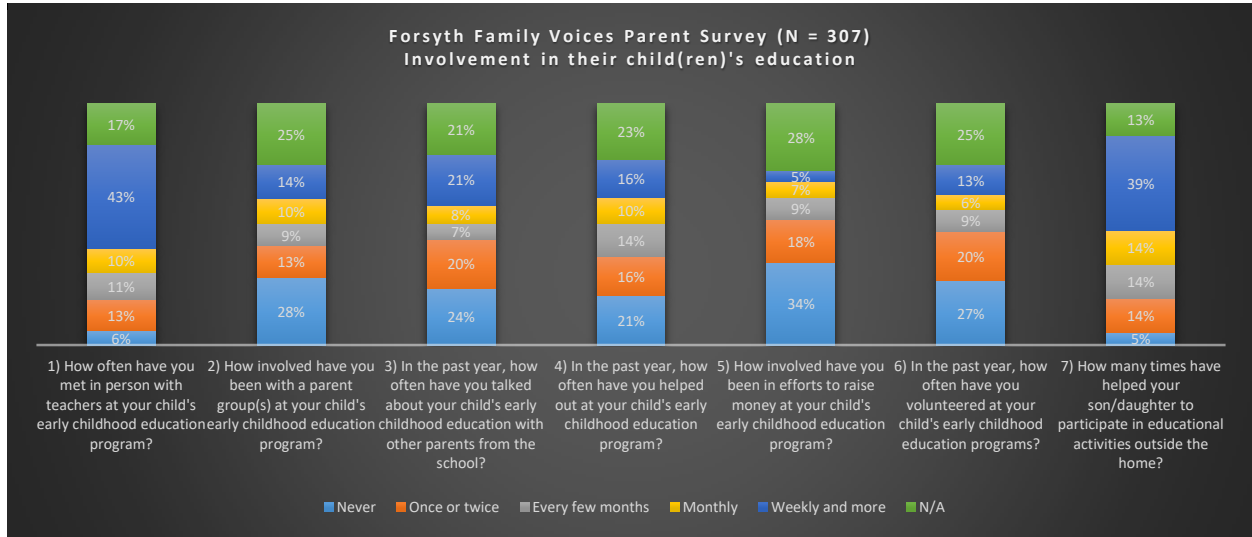
Involvement in Child's Education

3. Please rate the following questions about your involvement in your child(ren)'s education.
Never (1), Once or Twice (2), Every Few Month (3), Monthly (4), Weekly and More (5), N/A (0)

Involvement in Child's Education

3. Please rate the following questions about your involvement in your child(ren)'s education.

Never (1), Once or Twice (2), Every Few Month (3), Monthly (4), Weekly and More (5), N/A (0)



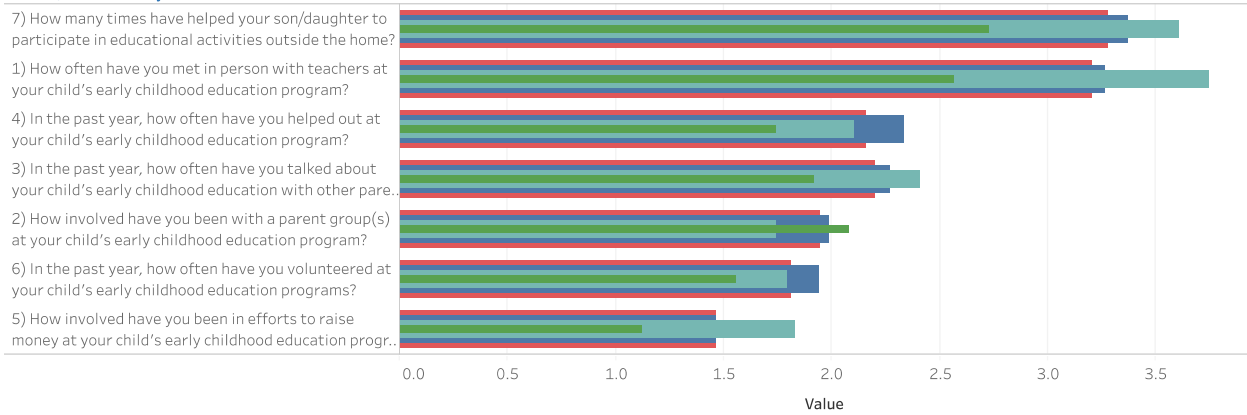
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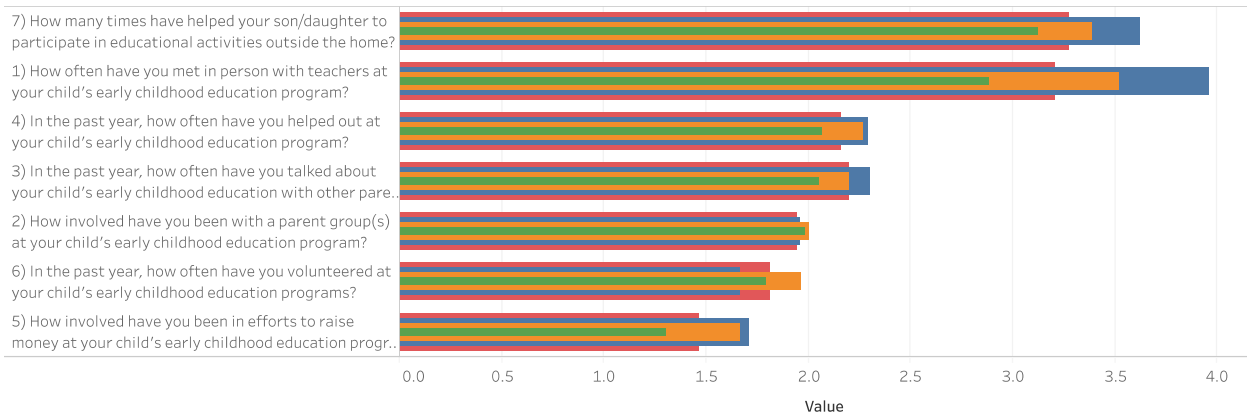
Never (1), Once or Twice (2), Every Few Month (3), Monthly (4), Weekly and More (5), N/A (0)

Average Rating

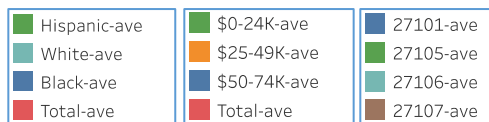
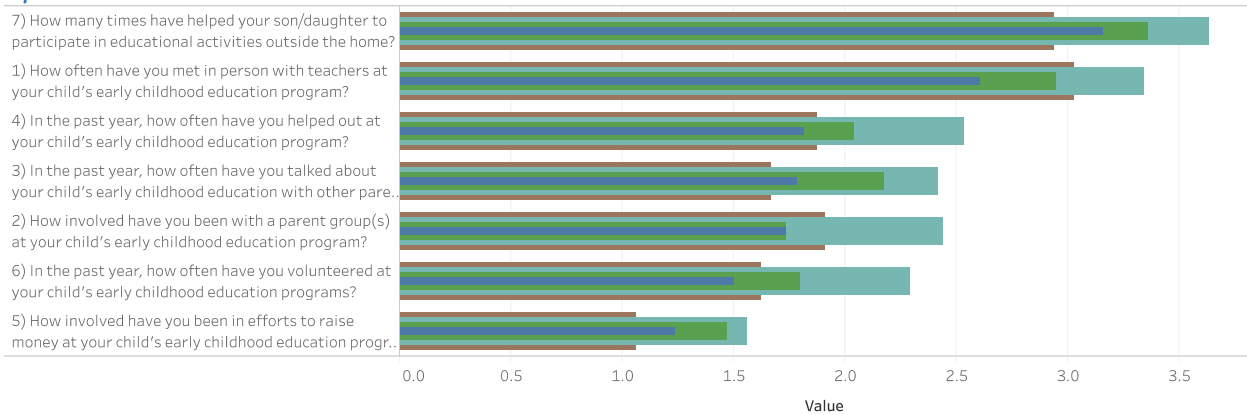
Race/Ethnicity



Income



Zip Code



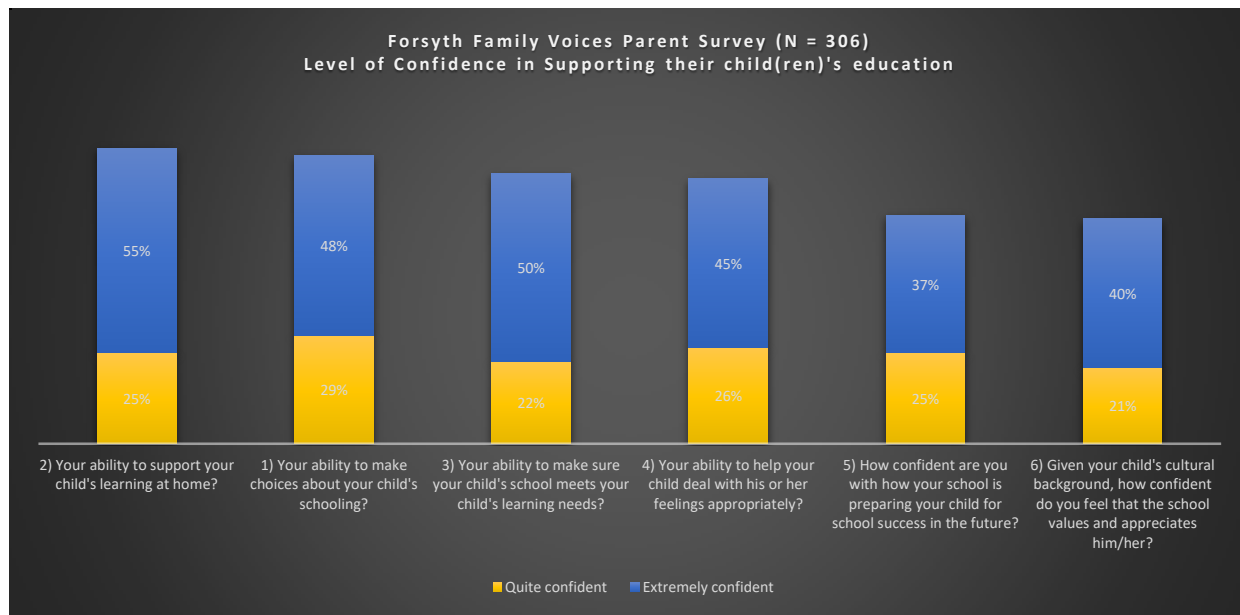
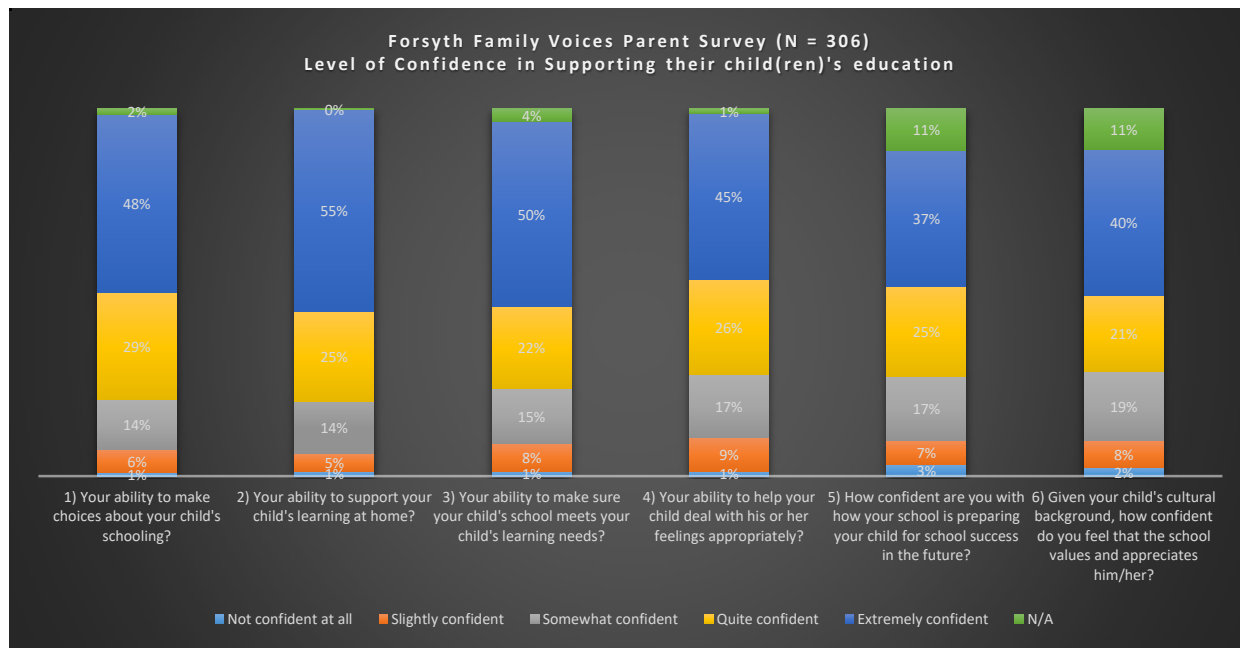
Confidence in Supporting Child's Education

4. Please rank the following statement regarding your confidence in supporting your child(ren)'s education.
 Not confident at all (1), Slightly confident (2), Somewhat confident (3), Quite confident (4), Extremely confident, N/A (0)

Confidence in Supporting Child's Education

4. Please rank the following statement regarding your confidence in supporting your child(ren)'s education.

Not confident at all (1), Slightly confident (2), Somewhat confident (3), Quite confident (4), Extremely confident, N/A (0)



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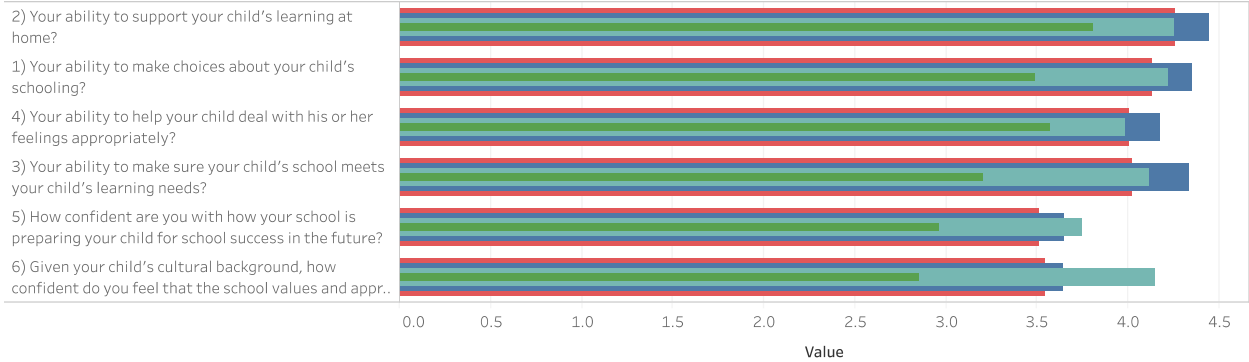


Confidence in Supporting Child's Education

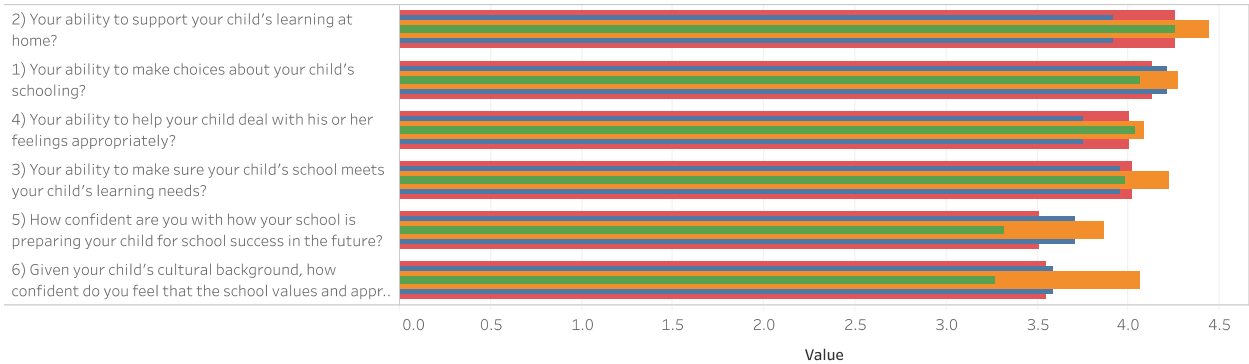
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Average Rating

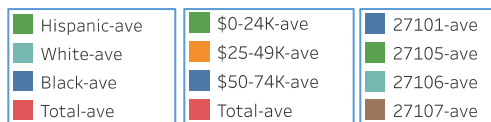
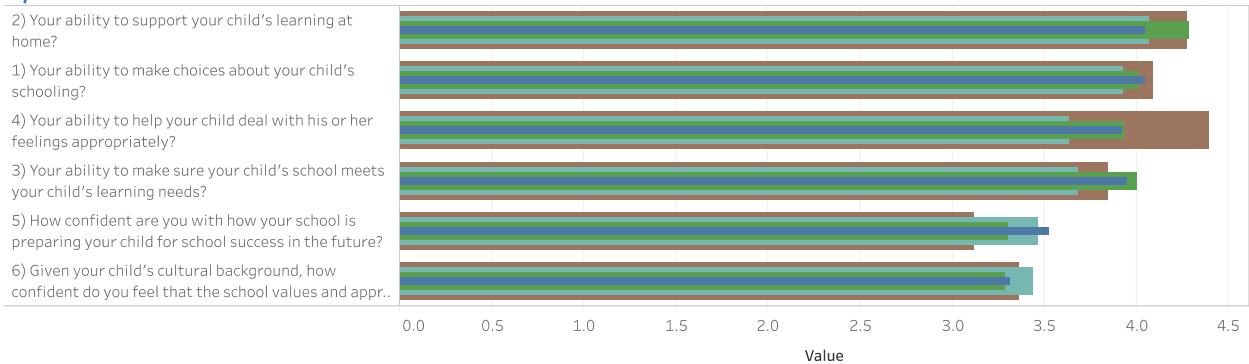
Race/Ethnicity



Income



Zip Code



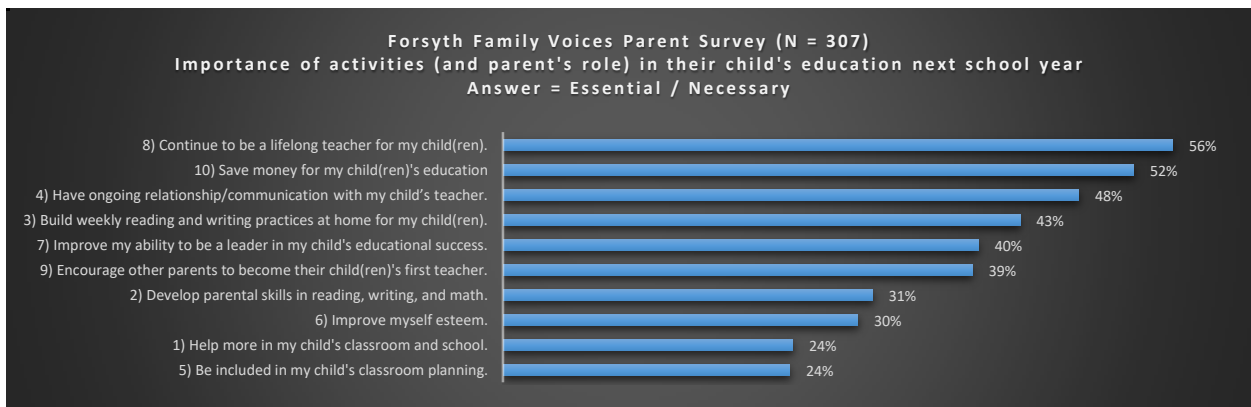
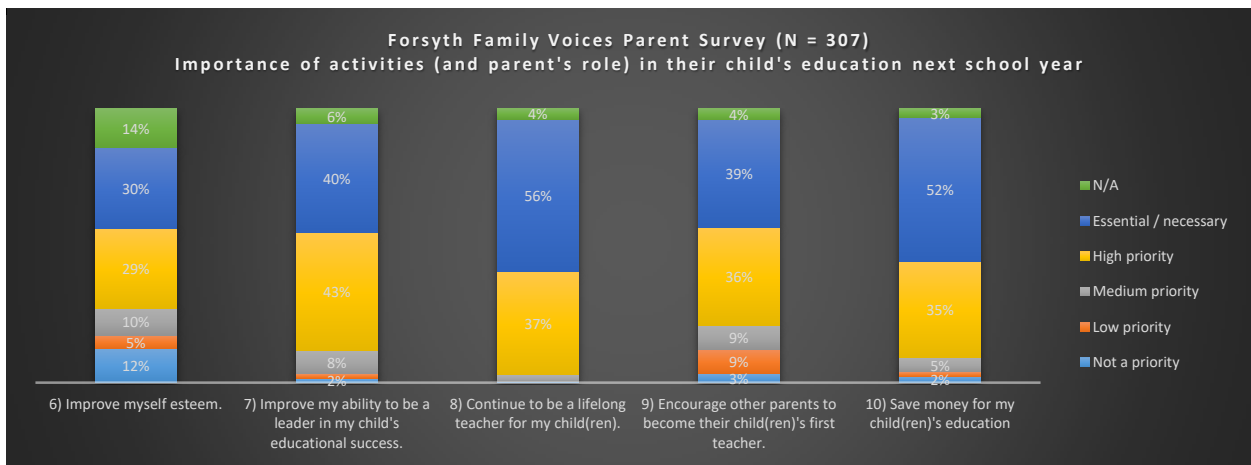
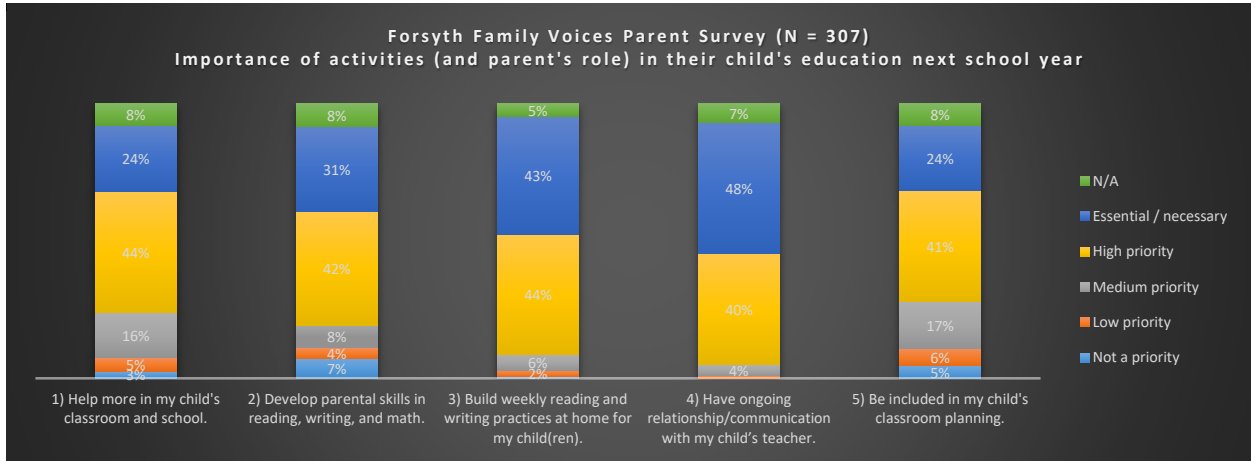
Importance of Activities

5. How important are the following activities (and your role) in your child's education during the next school year?
 Not a priority (1), Low priority (2), Medium priority (3), High priority (4), Essential/necessary (5), N/A (0)

Importance of Activities

5. How important are the following activities (and your role) in your child's education during the next school year?

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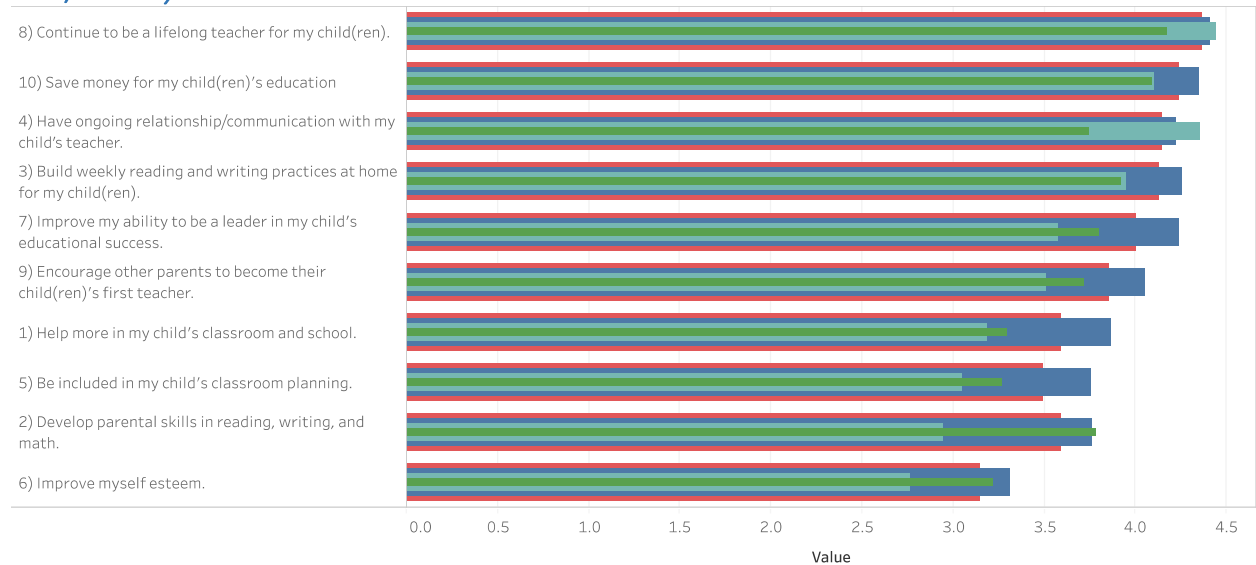


Importance of Activities

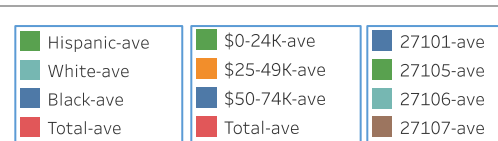
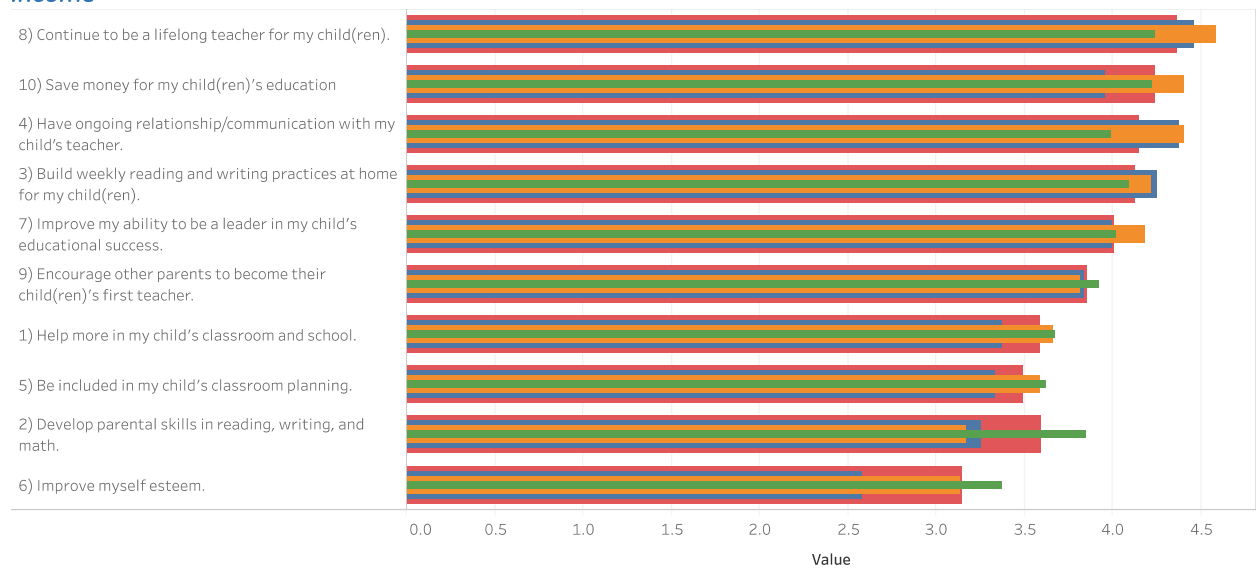
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Average Rating

Race/Ethnicity



Income

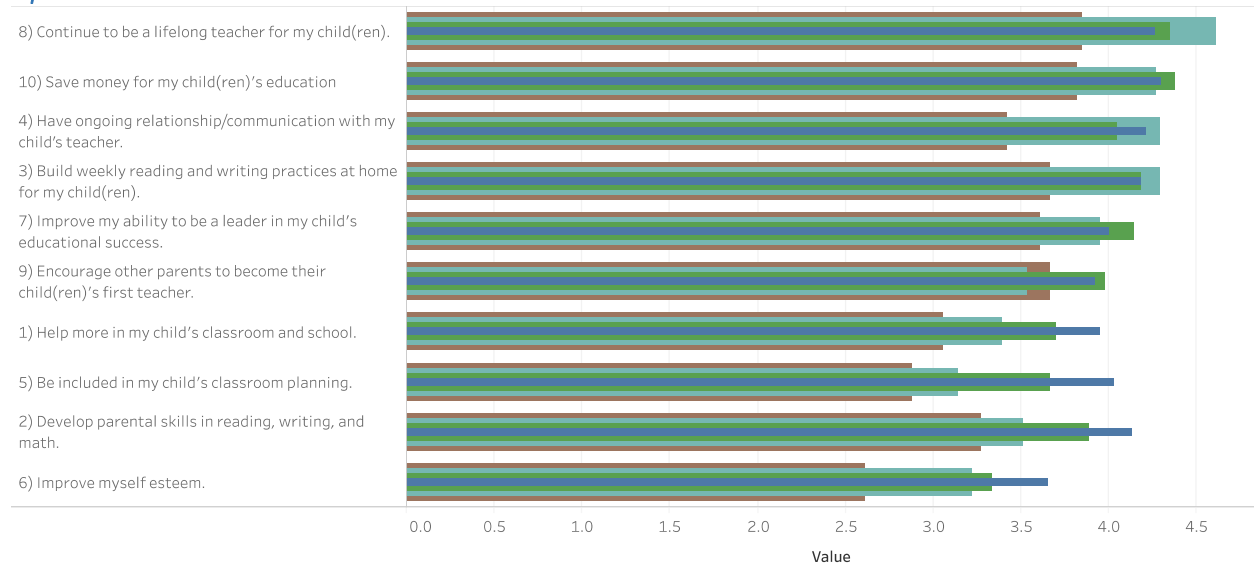


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Zip Code



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MDC Great Expectations: 2016 Forsyth Family Voices Survey Results and Analysis

Barrier to Being More Active in Child's Education

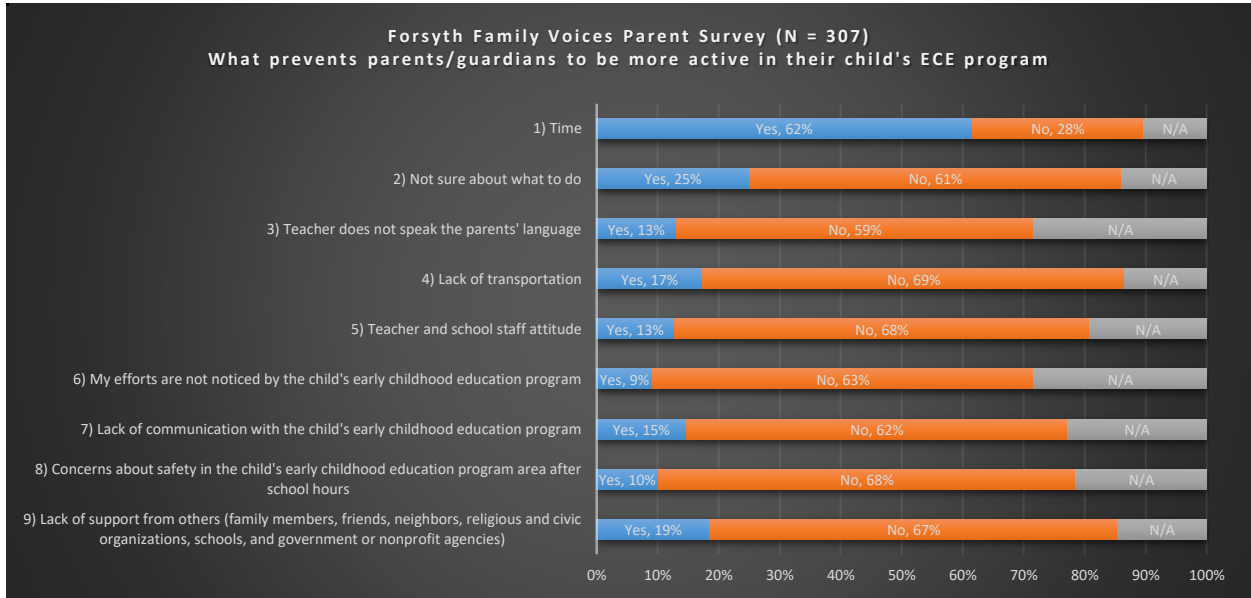
6. What prevents you as a parent / guardian to be more active in your child's early childhood education program?

Yes (1), No (0), N/A (0)

Barrier to Being More Active in Child's Education

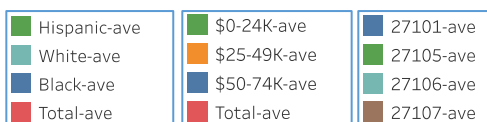
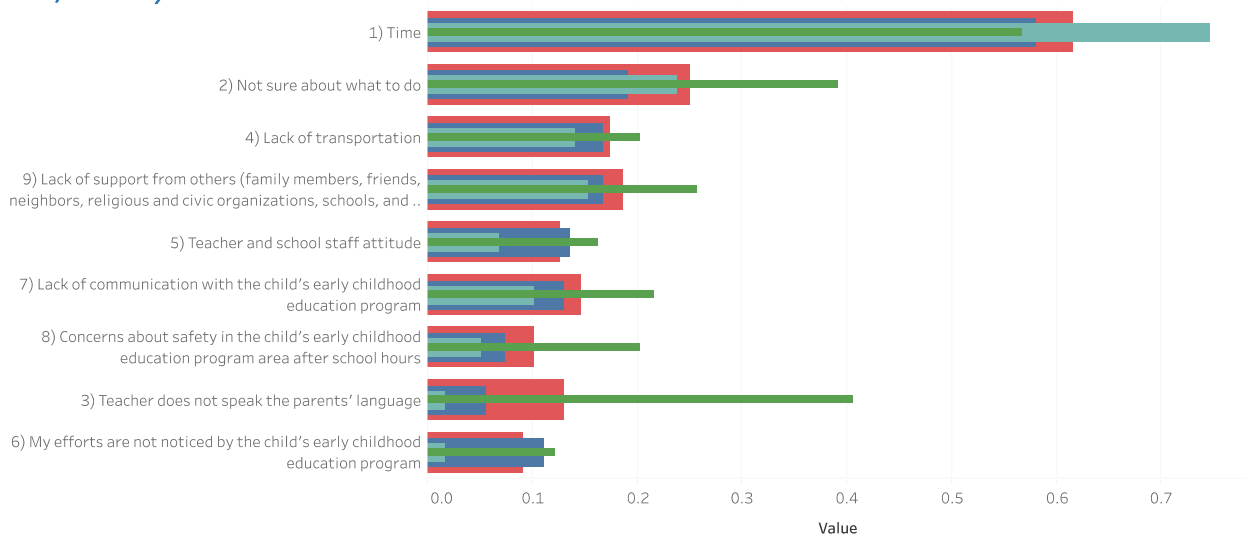
6. What prevents you as a parent / guardian to be more active in your child's early childhood education program?

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Average Rating

Race/Ethnicity



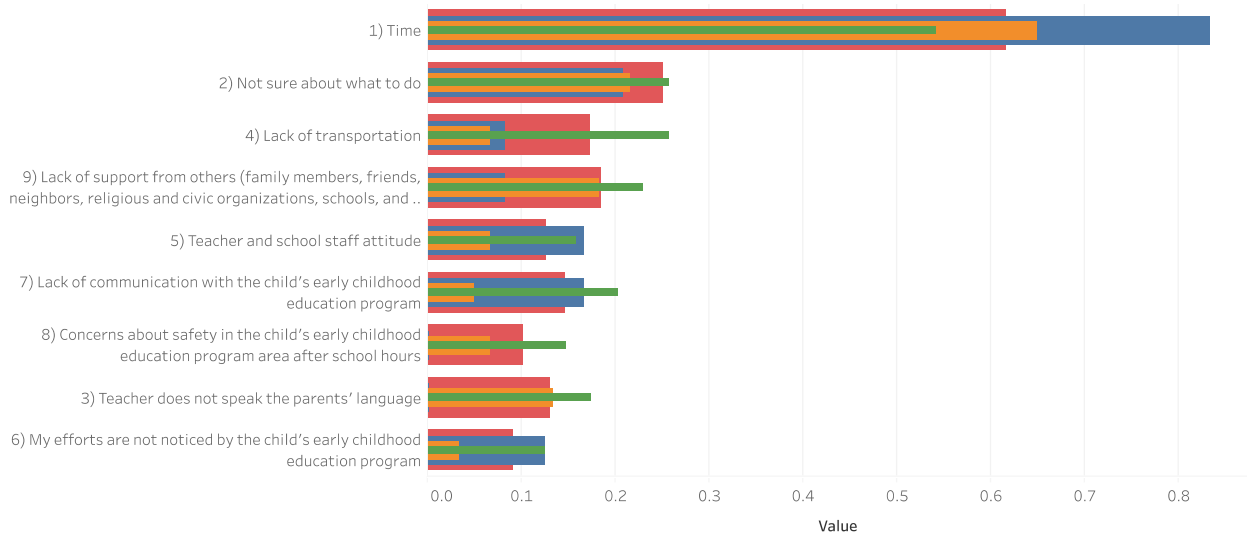
MDC Great Expectations: 2016 Forsyth Family Voices Survey Results and Analysis

Barrier to Being More Active in Child's Education

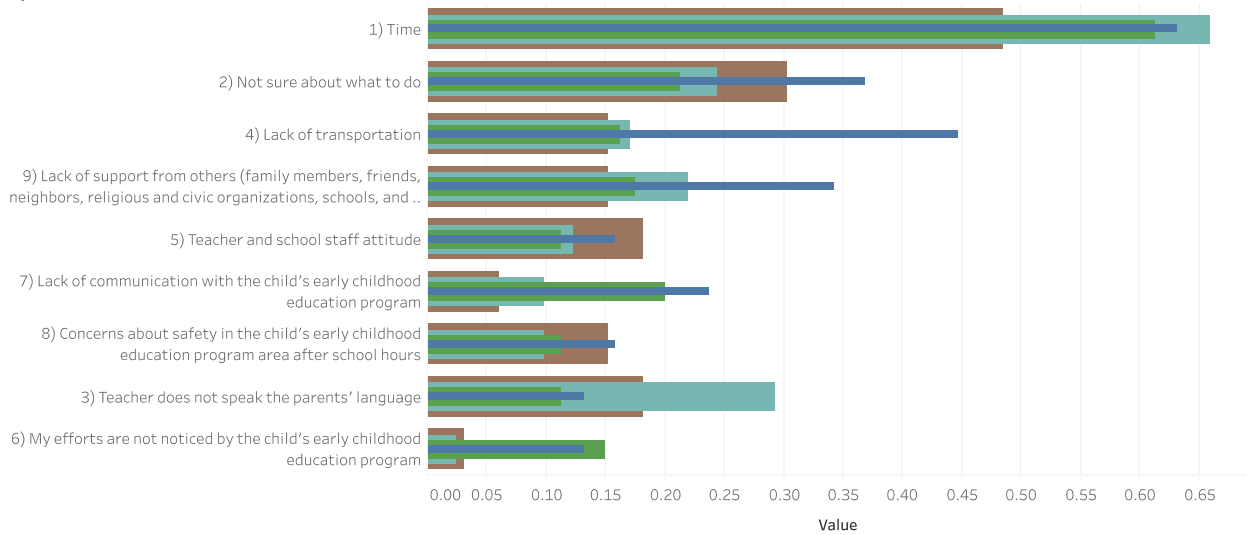
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Income



Zip Code



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White-ave	\$25-49K-ave	27105-ave
Black-ave	\$50-74K-ave	27106-ave
Total-ave	Total-ave	27107-ave



Need in the Past Year

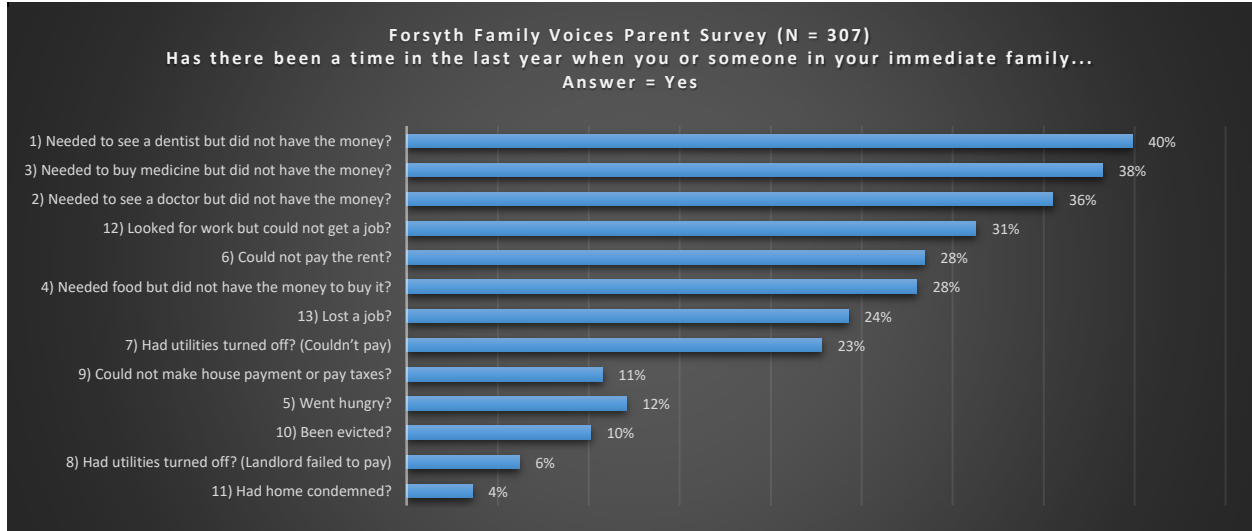
7. Has there been a time in the last year when you or someone in your immediate family:

Yes (1), No (0), N/A (0)

Need in the Past Year

7. Has there been a time in the last year when you or someone in your immediate family:

Yes (1), No (0), N/A (0)



Hispanic-ave	\$0-24K-ave	27101-ave
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Black-ave	\$50-74K-ave	27106-ave
Total-ave	Total-ave	27107-ave



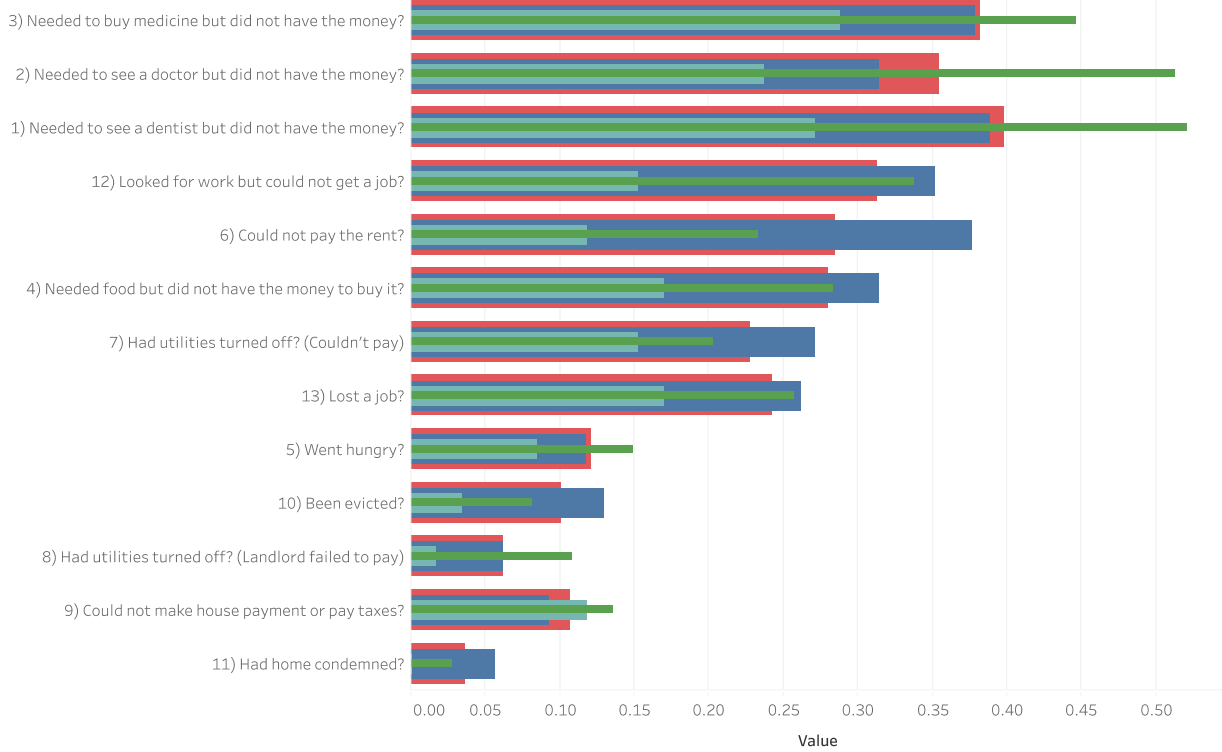
Need in the Past Year

7. Has there been a time in the last year when you or someone in your immediate family:

Yes (1), No (0), N/A (0)

Average Rating

Race/Ethnicity



Hispanic-ave	\$0-24K-ave	27101-ave
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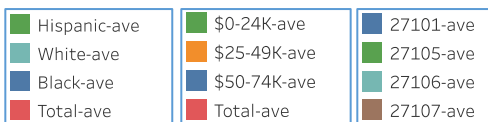
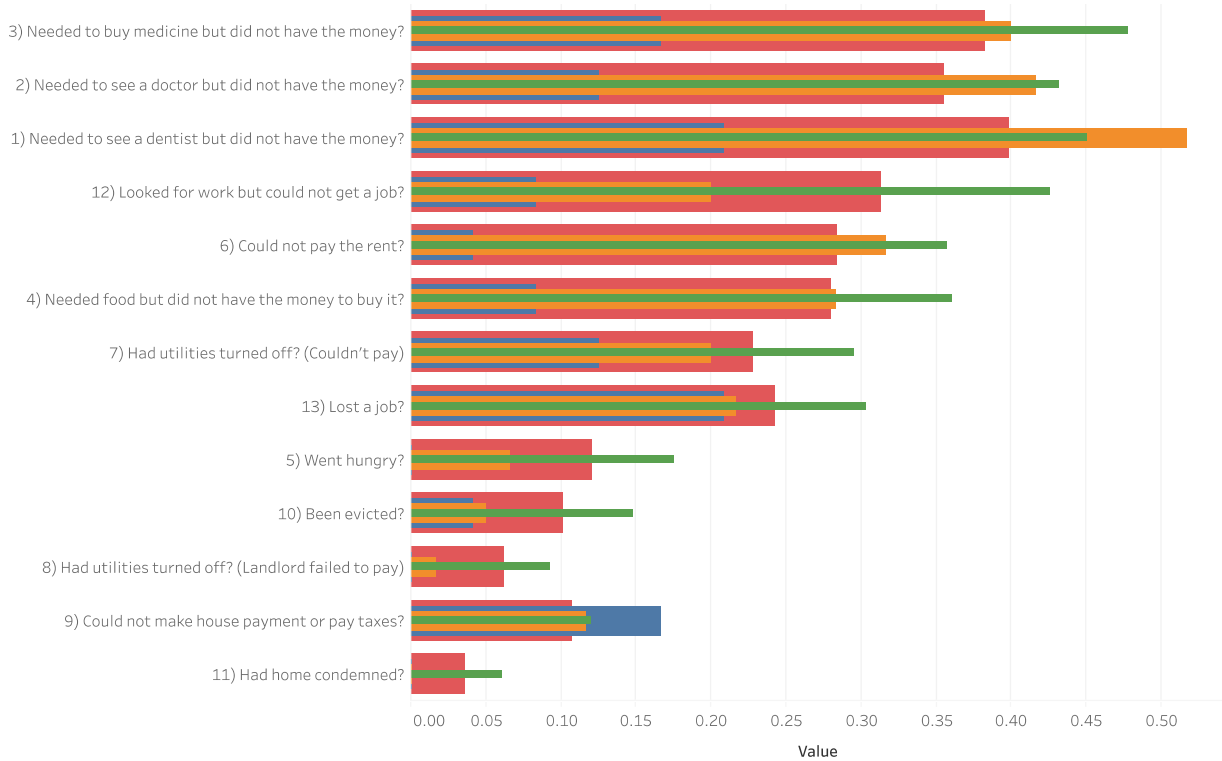


Need in the Past Year

7. Has there been a time in the last year when you or someone in your immediate family:

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Income

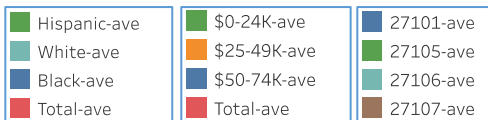
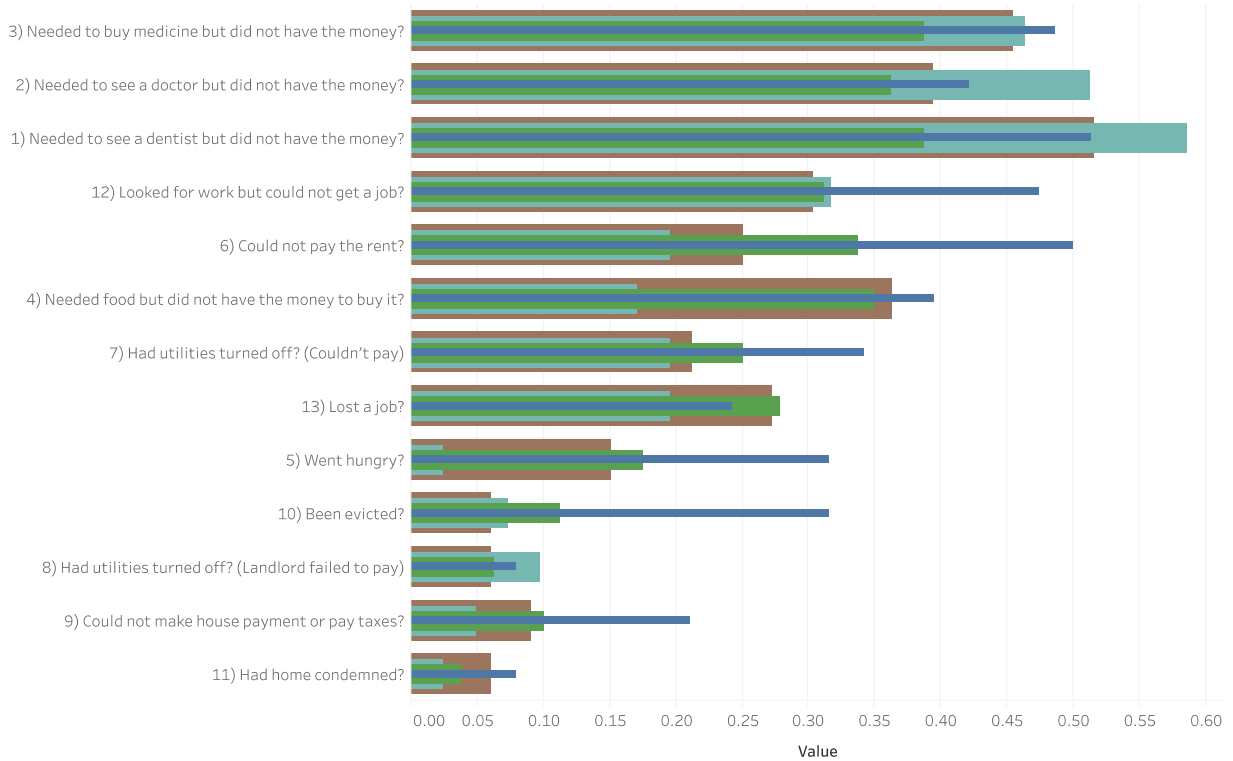


Need in the Past Year

7. Has there been a time in the last year when you or someone in your immediate family:

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Zip Code



Perception of Problems

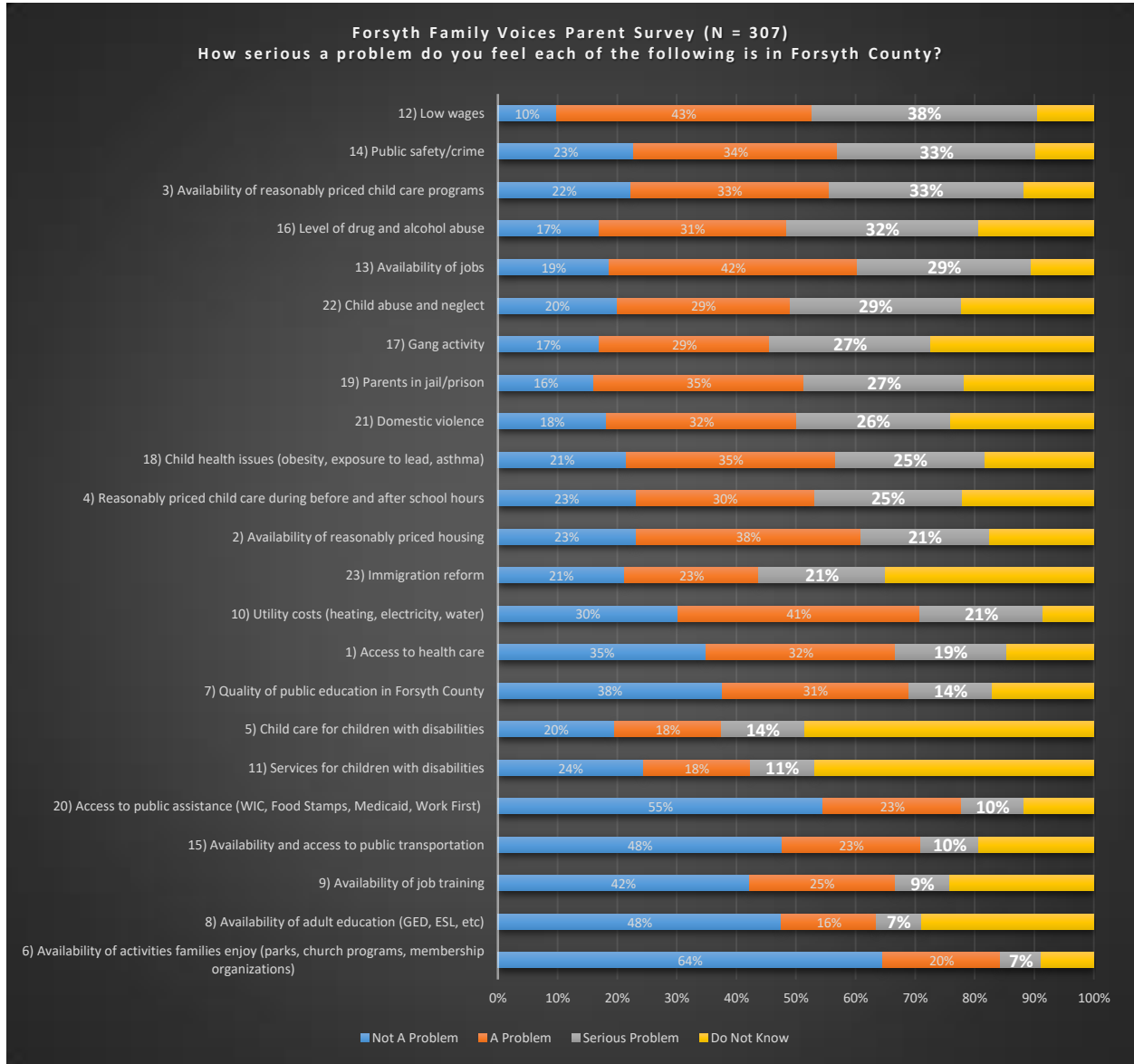
8. How serious a problem do you feel each of the following is in Forsyth County?

Not a problem (1), A problem (2), Serious problem (3), Do not know (0)

Perception of Problems

8. How serious a problem do you feel each of the following is in Forsyth County?

Not a problem (1), A problem (2), Serious problem (3), Do not know (0)



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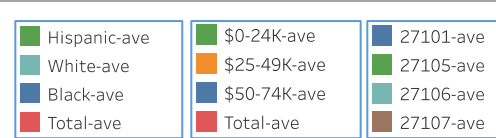
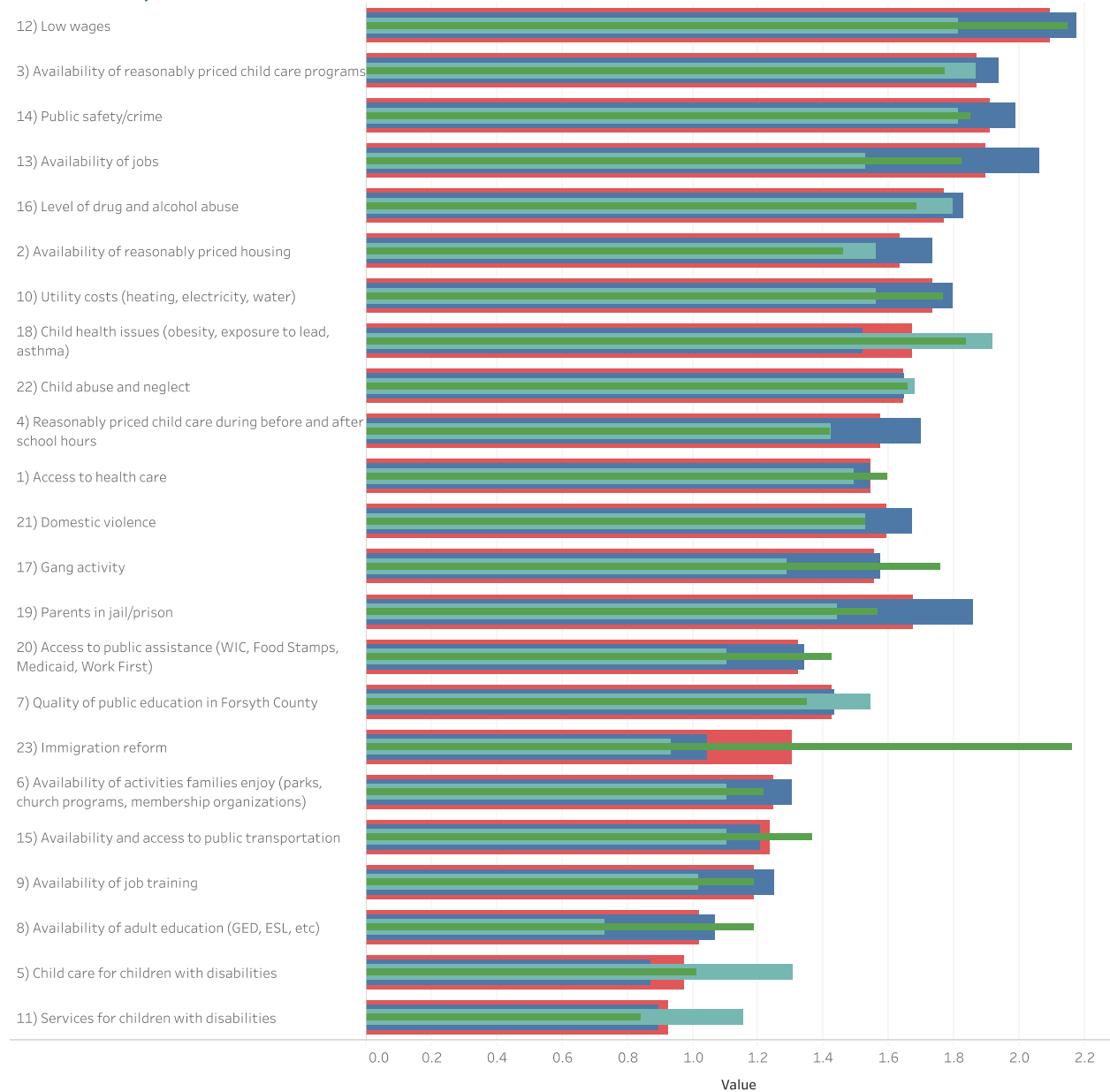
Perception of Problems

8. How serious a problem do you feel each of the following is in Forsyth County?

Not a problem (1), A problem (2), Serious problem (3), Do not know (0)

Average Rating

Race/Ethnicity

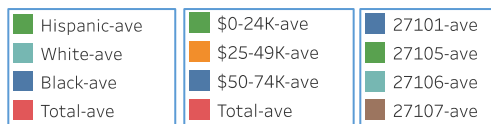
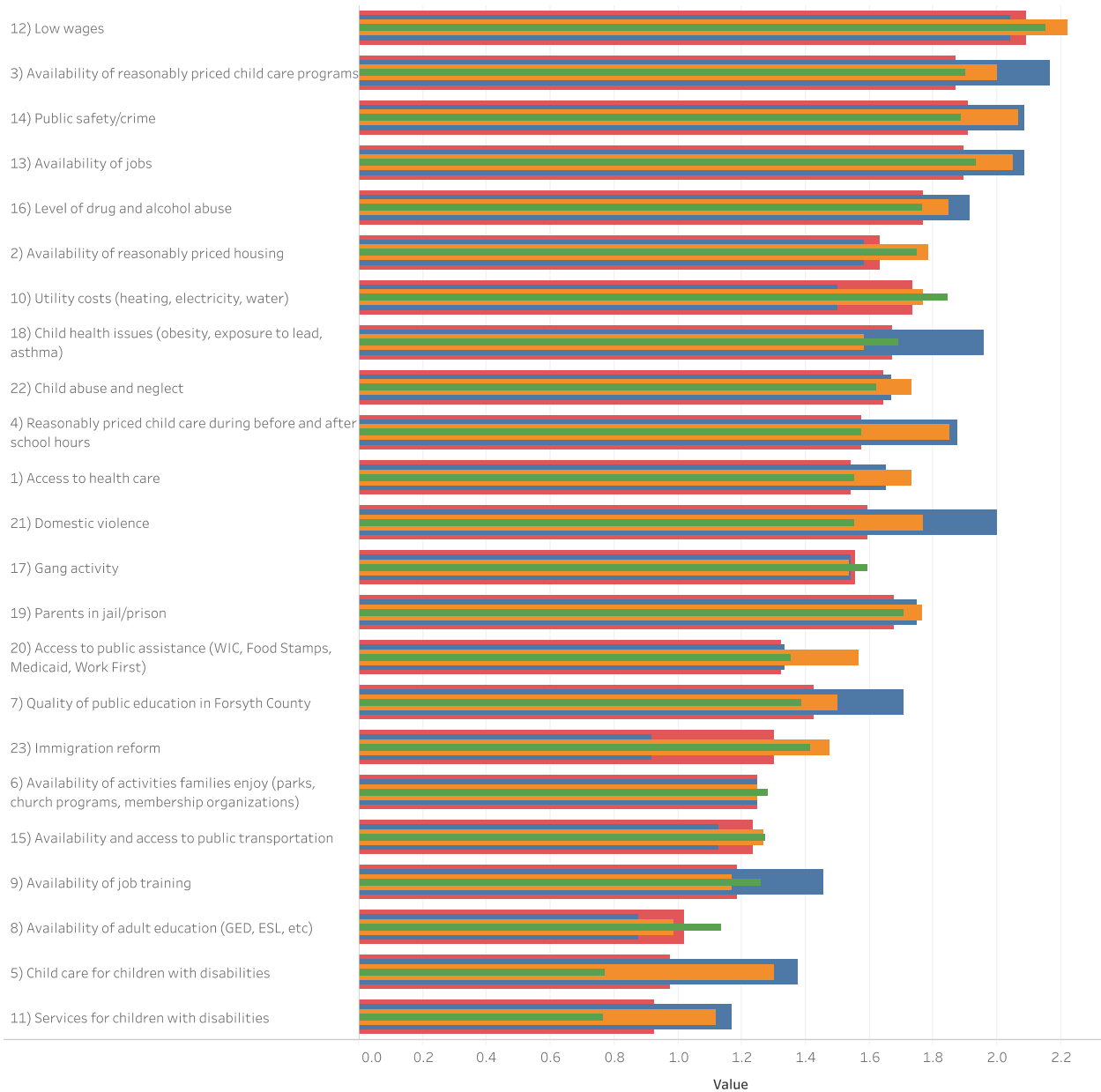


Perception of Problems

8. How serious a problem do you feel each of the following is in Forsyth County?

Not a problem (1), A problem (2), Serious problem (3), Do not know (0)

Income

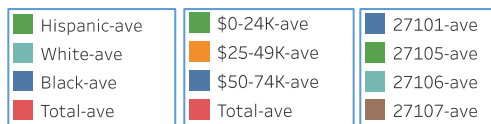
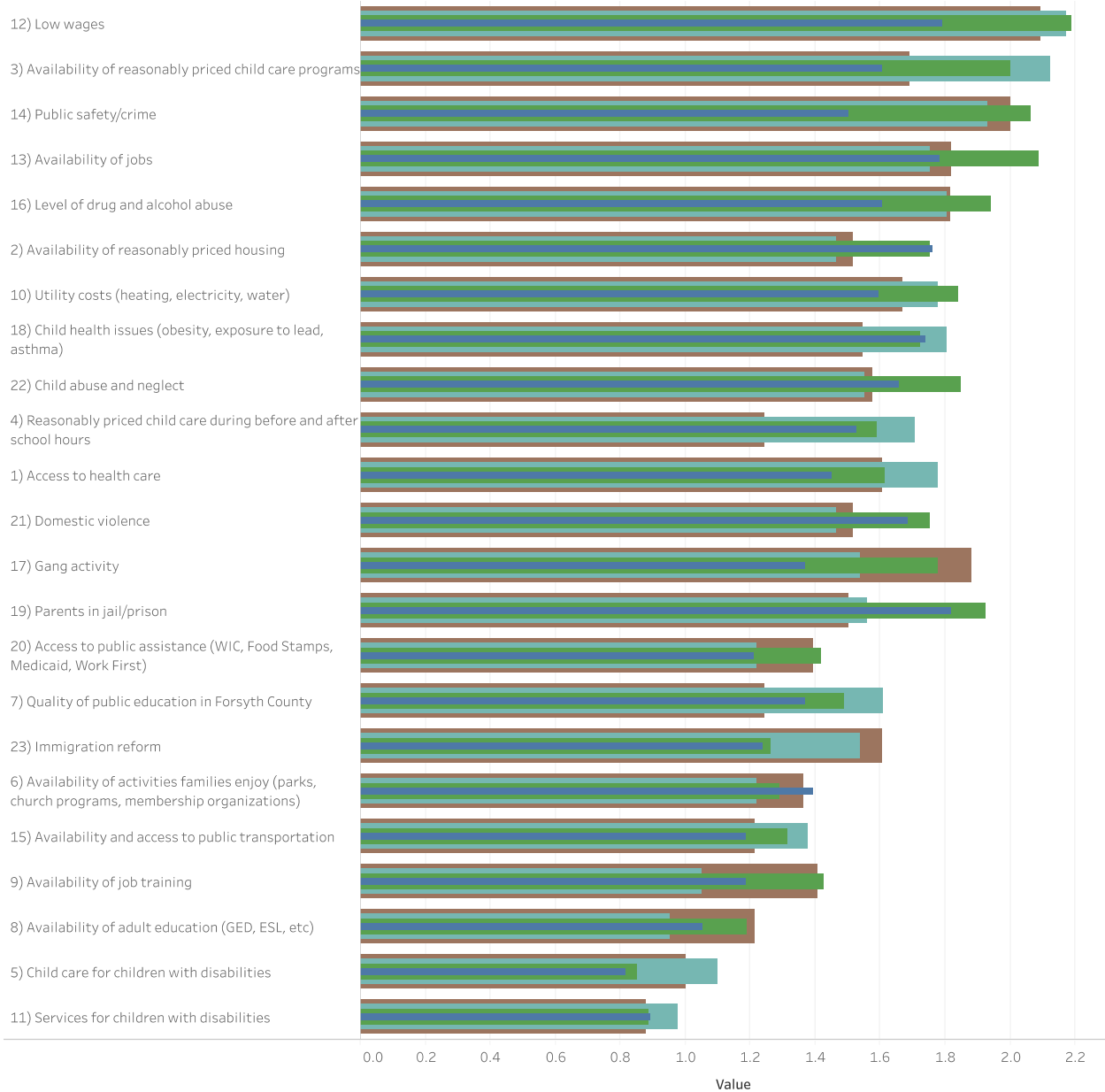


Perception of Problems

8. How serious a problem do you feel each of the following is in Forsyth County?

Not a problem (1), A problem (2), Serious problem (3), Do not know (0)

Zip Code

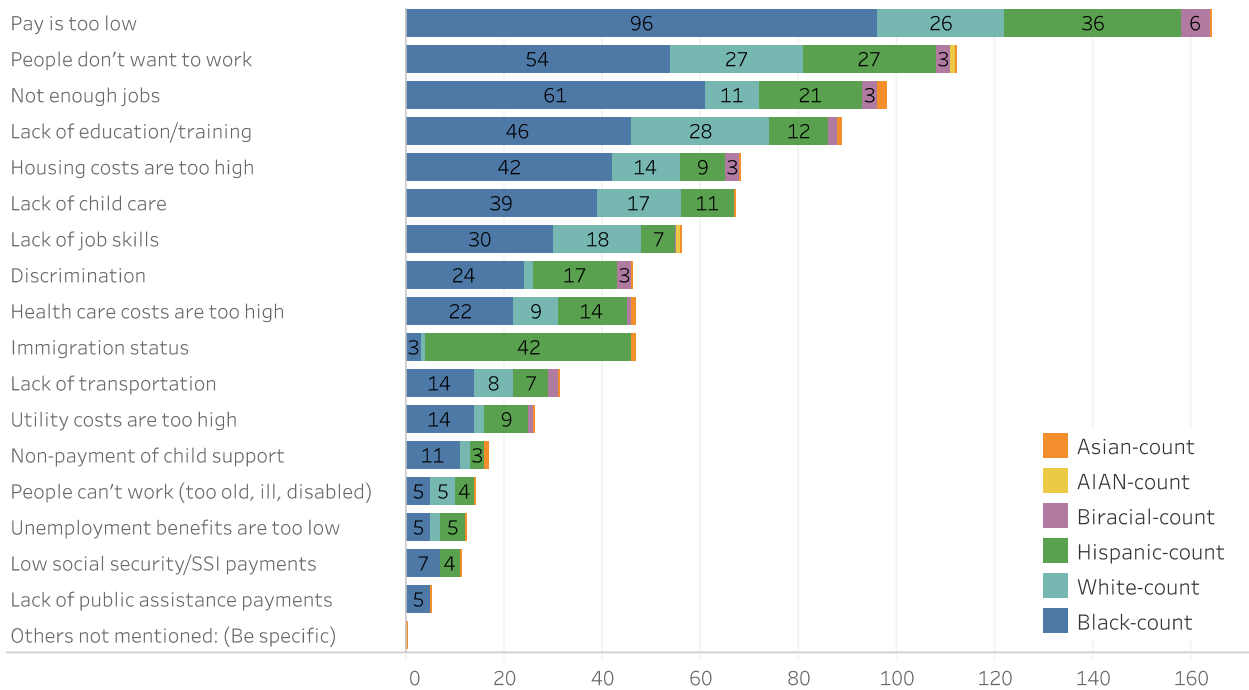


9. Please select the top THREE reasons you feel are the primary causes of poverty in our county.

Poverty

9. Please select the top THREE reasons you feel are the primary causes of poverty in our county.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Pay is too low	53.7%	165
People don't want to work	36.5%	112
Not enough jobs	31.9%	98
Lack of education/training	29.3%	90
Housing costs are too high	22.1%	68
Lack of child care	21.8%	67
Lack of job skills	18.2%	56
Immigration status	15.6%	48
Health care costs are too high	15.3%	47
Discrimination	15.0%	46
Lack of transportation	10.1%	31
Utility costs are too high	8.5%	26
Others not mentioned: (Be specific)	6.8%	21
Non-payment of child support	5.5%	17
People can't work (too old, ill, disabled)	4.6%	14
Unemployment benefits are too low	3.9%	12
Low social security/SSI payments	3.6%	11
Lack of public assistance payments	1.6%	5



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Reputation of Early Childhood Education

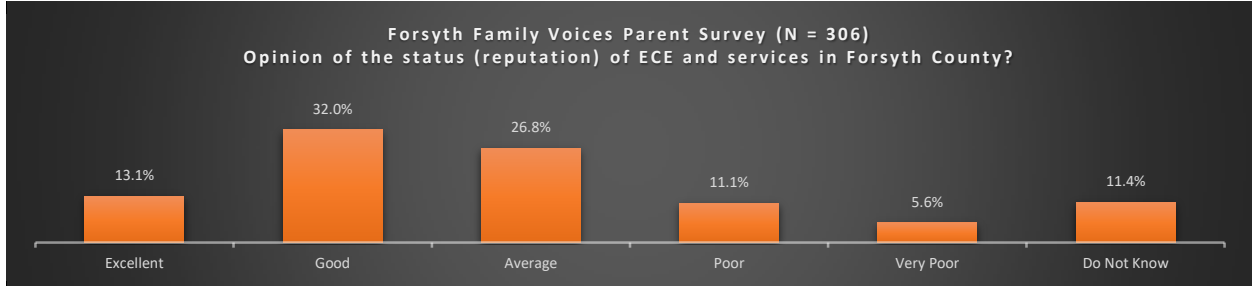
10. In your opinion, what is the status (reputation) of early childhood education and services in Forsyth County?

Excellent (5), Good (4), Average (3), Poor (2), Very Poor (1), Do not know (0)

Reputation of Early Childhood Education

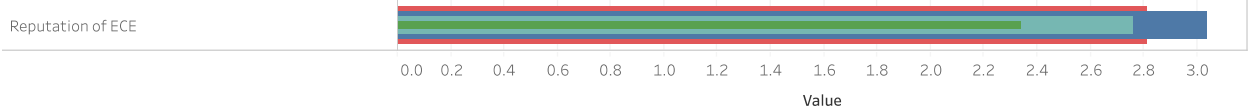
10. In your opinion, what is the status (reputation) of early childhood education and services in Forsyth County?

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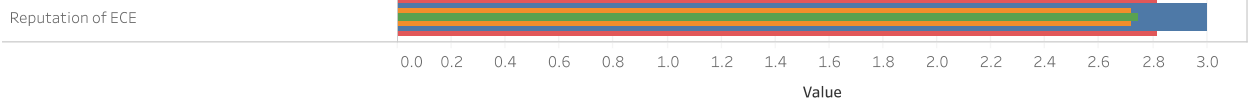


Average Rating

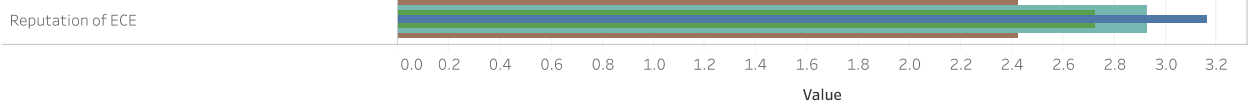
Race/Ethnicity



Income



Zip Code



Hispanic-ave	\$0-24K-ave	27101-ave
White-ave	\$25-49K-ave	27105-ave
Black-ave	\$50-74K-ave	27106-ave
Total-ave	Total-ave	27107-ave



Ability to Access Free Early Childhood Education Service

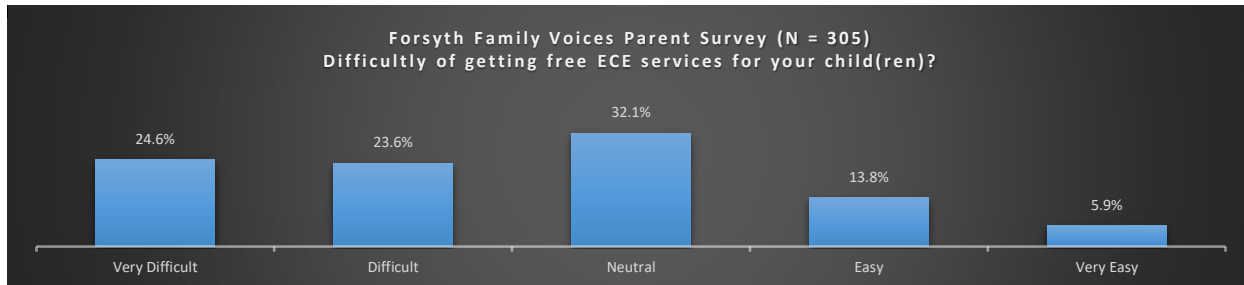
11. How difficult is it to get free early childhood education services for your child(ren)?

Very Difficult (5), Difficult (4), Neutral (3), Easy (2), Very Easy (1)

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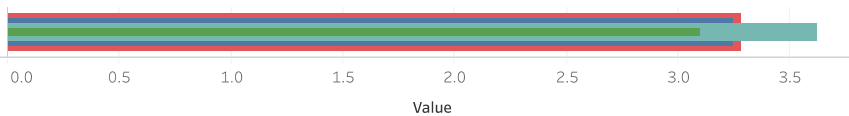
Very Difficult (5), Difficult (4), Neutral (3), Easy (2), Very Easy (1)



Average Rating

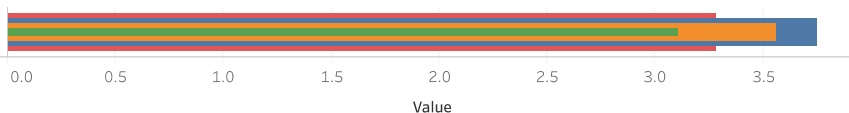
Race/Ethnicity

Difficult to Access ECE



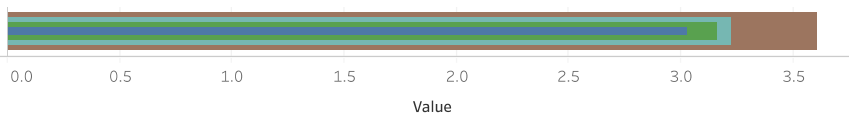
Income

Difficult to Access ECE



Zip Code

Difficult to Access ECE



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Qualitative Responses

12. List the top 2 service agencies (health, education, human services) that your neighbors use the most in Forsyth County. (n=293)

Most respondents indicated their neighbors use the Department of **Social Services** (DSS), the **Health** Department, Department of **Human Services**, **WIC**, the Downton **Health Plaza** and Forsyth County **Schools**. Additional agencies (and/or services) used include Medicaid, Food Stamps, Salvation Army, Social Security, Novant Health, CDSA, Crisis Control, Goodwill, Head Start, Public Libraries, Smart Start and the Housing Authority.

13. What are the 2 or 3 most important things you **NEED** to improve quality of life for those living in your home? (n=301)

The 2 or 3 most important things respondents need to improve the quality of life for those living in their home were **better wages** and employment, more **education, housing, time, health** (health care, health insurance and better personal health), **child care**, and **transportation**. Additional responses included food, housing, immigration needs, and dental insurance.

14. What 2 or 3 things you **CAN DO** to improve quality of life for those living in your home? (n=299)

The 2 or 3 things respondents indicated they can do to improve the quality of life for those living in their home include going back to school and/or finishing their **education**, looking for better **employment**, spending more **quality time** at home with the family, **cooking and eating healthier** meals, **saving money** and budget, **exercising** and losing weight, **cleaning more** and finding better **housing**.

15. What 2 or 3 things Forsyth community organizations can do to improve quality of life for those living in your home? (n=293)

Coding	Rank	
Education / Training	1	Access to; improve quality of education/educate teachers; ESL; provide resources. Employment, finance, child development/how to raise.
Activities	2	For children (in general) and children with special needs. Free community activities, before and after school programs.
Health care	3	Access to; financial aid for health care.
Information	3	Access to; about education, available services
Child care	4	Access/Provision to child care; free/affordable;
Employment	4	More; job skills; support.
Support	4	Single parents; other.

Note:

- Nutrition is a recurring subject in many answers
- Communication: clarity on how to receive support and obtain information on available services to attain the goals to improve life.

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Q1: Describe the quality of early childhood education in the county. Talk about your experiences.

Focus Group Interview Questions and Responses













Agencies completed seven focus group Interviews with a diverse group of parents, guardians and grandparents from different backgrounds, cultures, educational levels, income levels, and races/ethnicities. In the summary of responses, general statements are included that offer a synopsis of the collective sentiment expressed by the different focus groups that participated. Specific individual answers that provide insights from parents that participated are also included.

Q1: Describe the quality of early childhood education in the county. Talk about your experiences.

Overall the perspective of parents about early childhood education in the county is positive. Many parents commented about the need for constantly training teachers. Several of the parents had children with a disability and they expressed that many teachers lack the knowledge and understanding to work with and support their children. Another general comment made often was the need to train parents to become more active and more critical of education and programs. One parent described this training need stating, “many parents just look at the school building and think that the quality of the education is good or bad.”

Several of the individual answers from parents about the quality of early childhood education in the county include the following:

- “My children still remember and speak about their teachers in early childhood and they had a very positive experience.”
- “As a mom of a daughter with a disability I know it is really hard for many teachers to deal with my child. I come to the school and I see my daughter always by herself not playing or sharing time with everybody. The teacher told me that my daughter ‘needs five teachers to take care of her.’ I think that teacher needs more training on how to have more compassion.”
- “Not all teachers are the same but they need training.”
- “Parents need to drop in unannounced and not just drop the children.”
- “My experience is good and the teachers are good but the pay is low for the work they perform.”
- “I am a first-time mother and do not know much but I am happy that my child was accepted. He needs the opportunity to learn more than what I can teach him at home.”
- “The quality of early childhood education depends on the side of town you have your child in school. Location matters but some teachers could be good in a bad location as well.”
- “Some teachers do it for the money and they need to be more professional.”
- “Nothing but great things to say about early childhood education experience for my family, my children are in Head Start.”
- “My son learned a lot and in two days he changed, he is cleaning now.”
- “I do not worry about my kid in school, the teachers are good.”
- “I am impressed on how my child became motivated to read.”

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Q2: How much of a challenge is it to have an impact on decisions regarding your children's education at the local (county), regional or state level?

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After an initial analysis of the parent survey it was clear that we wanted to learn more about the parents' perspective about their impact or lack of impact on decisions in education. Parents, for the most part, expressed that they do not have enough information on how to be effective in the decisions about school and education of their children.

Some of the individual answers include:

- "It would be different if the parents are taught to run meetings and not the other way around."
- "We need parent advocates in the system that show the way and model leadership."
- "We could train the parents to be better leaders and advocates."
- "We have so many non-experts, people out of the classroom, deciding for many parents."
- "It is a challenge, no voice, they tell us and dictate how things will happen, not much."
- "I do not keep up with much."
- "In the school system I learned a lot however, it is hard to change a system that is the same for so many years."
- "Parents need to be in school, ask questions, be present when decisions are made and not at home."
- "I think that many parents have the education and information they need to run the IEP meetings."
- "I want to be involved, if you call me I will be there."

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Q3: How do you stay informed about the services that are available for your child and your family in Forsyth County?

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Parents use different sources to stay informed. However, there seems to be confusion among parents regarding the best source of information. Regarding their communication preference on how to receive the information, it is very much dependent on several factors: location, language skills, network with other parents, connection with school and agencies, among others.

Some of the individual answers collected about how parents stay informed include:

- “Word to mouth is the best.”
- “I have a newborn and I received plenty of information at the hospital.”
- “Big packets of information are not the most effective way to learn.”
- “Parent orientations and one-on-one sessions are effective.”
- “Parent’s night is a good event for parents to come together and relate.”
- “It is so confusing, lots of information to take, having a person to go to would be helpful.”
- “Make time for parents to get together and talk about school and childcare.”
- “It is hard when the language is a barrier. My English is not good and the level of difficulty is a challenge to understand the information given.”
- “I am not aware of information or what I need to do about Pre-K or how to get started.”
- “I email Greizy (Work Family Resource Center staff)”
- “Facebook is good or sometimes I talk to other parents.”
- “Parent meetings help.”
- “I ask tough questions when I go to my child’s school, about the curriculum.”
- “I get the information at different agencies, particularly DSS and Smart Start. They treat me well, like I am not a number.”
- “I benefit from the Youth in Transition program; I have learned about other opportunities there.”

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Q4: What are your ideas about the possibility or opportunity to work with other parents to support each other and improve education programs in Forsyth County for young children?

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There is consensus among participants that opportunities to work with other parents is positive and beneficial as they try to improve programs for young children.

Selected individual answers requesting ideas to work with other parents to support each other included:

- “I’d like to see a PTA-like group but for early childhood education.”
- “In Pre-K they have an orientation and parents can organize and come together then.”
- “This type of meeting (focus groups) is helpful, I can listen and share my ideas, big packets of information are the not best way to learn.”
- “Parents of special needs kids could benefit from meeting like this, help us work together and have someone to take care of then and we do not have to worry.”
- “Have a parents’ quarterly night meeting.”
- “Reach out to other early childhood centers, get agencies together, to organize a big parent’s night.”
- “Have workshops in Spanish for parents to learn what is going on.”
- “Create a “room mom” program – someone behind the scenes to get the information for other parents that are not connected or able to come to the program.”
- “Me and my husband would like to be better than my parents and participate and get involved in the school of my kids.”
- “We need to take another parent to meetings and invite them. Sometimes it is intimidating to come solo, so having parents team up is best.”
- “There are divisions and many times we see the discrimination because we are Hispanics. I want to get information from other families but others do not care. I need to get the information. Where I come from the community is small and in a big city (like this) may be harder.”

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Focus Group Interview Questions and Responses

Q5: What are the barriers that prevent most parents and guardians to be more active in your child's early childhood education program? Follow up: How do we build early childhood education advocacy leaders among all communities in the county?

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The focus group responses followed similar answers we received from the parent surveys. However, parents that participated in the focus groups explained some of the barriers in a more personal fashion. Based on the responses to this question, programs and agencies must engage parents on this to have more intentional messages and actions that help parents break unique barriers of participation.

Some individual answers regarding the barriers that prevent parent to be more active include:

- "Time and limitations based on work."
- "Many parents do not know the right practices to be parents or to teach children."
- "Some lack the understanding of the serious opportunity of investing now. For example, the social and emotional growth needs to happen before school starts. We do not have the social and emotional development focus in kindergarten. Early childhood education would like school to go back to that purpose (supporting the social and emotional development of children) but it is too late."
- "We need NC Pre-K for all."
- "Transportation, I do not take them to Head Start due to time and access. I do not have a car."
- "Make available a bus or van transportation to help people out. They may not use the bus passes just to go to one event. They use it for other things."
- "Many parents need to be trained and they do not know what is expected when they come in to school."
- "Some agencies need to do better networking with parents and create opportunities like health fairs, job fairs, have a presence in other events so the parents can learn about you."
- "Find things that the parents like or things they would be interested in doing, after that establish a program like that you could teach and organize them to become more active and break barriers."

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Conclusions

1. Parents feel they are not fully engaged but they are willing and likely to lead. The type of engagement that most parents referred to is not to just become volunteers supporting these participating agencies, but to have leading roles and become more accountable in supporting the development and education of their children. Parents involved in the Forsyth Family Voices project did not show neutrality, rather they have strong opinions, experiences, and beliefs that make them act or react. Great Expectations would benefit from purposefully connecting to those parent opinions and experiences to foster opportunities for parents to come together around shared interests and commonalities. During the parent focus groups, conversation came naturally when people were reacting to the same topic; the effect was particularly obvious in all of the different locations that hosted the interviews.













In addition to supporting parent participation, it is important for any Forsyth County initiative that focuses on increasing parent participation to clearly define what is meant by parental involvement; provide examples of parents' decision making roles; remove structural barriers, and identify other county organizations/entities that have an interest in developing and increasing the parents' role. Furthermore, initiatives must recognize that parental involvement varies depending on the characteristics of the agency and the parent's personal definition of parental involvement.

2. The participating agencies that most enjoyed and gained insight from the process established during the Forsyth Family Voices project were agencies that proactively "led" interactions with parents and community members in a structured setup. This proactive process focuses on interactive dialogue and recruiting varied, diverse parents, and reveals clearer assessment and interpretations of parents' expectations, limitations and strengths. From the agencies' perspective, the use of focus groups had an advantage over surveys, as agencies can hear first-hand the "why?" behind the participants' comments, get insights by observing nonverbal behavior and expressions, and directly engage with different cultures and diverse audiences.
3. There is a clear need to support and encourage Forsyth parents to become strong, informed advocates for children. Based on the results of the study, many parents lack advocacy skills but are highly motivated to positively influence their children's development and education. Parents from *all* zip codes and income levels have a desire to improve the lifelong health, safety, and learning of children. Developing the interest of Forsyth County parents as natural leaders will increase communication and collaborative decision-making skills of parents who are, or wish to be, in a leadership role within the community, agencies, and schools.

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Appendices

- A. Parent Survey
- B. Do's and Don'ts about Focus Group Surveys
- C. Focus Group Questions
- D. Family/Parent Survey Consent Form

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