

LANE COUNTY SURVEY OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Survey Results, March 1996

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Introduction and Background

As one part of a continuing effort to better serve the needs of children and families in the State of Oregon, the Oregon Commission on Children and Families (OCCF) contracted with the Oregon Survey Research Laboratory (OSRL) to conduct prototype research in Lane County. Planning for this survey began in Fall 1994 with Maury Johnson, Pam Curtis, Lennie Bjornsen and Steve Nelson of OCCF and proceeded through Winter 1996. Working closely with representatives of the Lane Commission on Children and Families (Lane CCF), John Ball, Janet Carlson and Jeff Luke, OSRL conducted a representative telephone survey of 806 adults and households February 28 through March 9, 1996.

Survey Methodology

Survey Instrument

The overall goals of the survey were to obtain valid and reliable information from Lane County citizens regarding issues related to Lane CCF's twelve benchmarks. In designing the survey instrument, OSRL used a multipath approach which included: drawing from OSRL's survey archives and professional networks for questions related to Lane CCF's needs; creating original survey questions; and extensively pretesting individual questions and the entire survey instrument with approximately 90 persons, including members of the survey population, family professionals, survey experts, and potential users of the data from OCCF and Lane CCF.

Although most of the survey questions were OSRL originals, some questions are direct parallels to the 1988 National Survey of Families and Households, the 1996 National Opinion Research Center's National Issues Convention, the 1994 Oregon Population Survey, the 1994 Clackamas County Children and Families Community Attitude Survey, and the 1995 Florence Area Coordinating Council's Community Goals Survey. The survey instrument was revised and pretested several times, in consultation with representatives of Lane CCF and OCCF. The survey instrument was programmed into OSRL's computer-aided telephone interviewing (CATI) system and further pretested.

The survey instrument comprised the following subject areas:

1. **Children's and parent's rights**, such as taking into account children's opinions in family decision making, parents' rights to search children's belongings in general and for marijuana in particular, teen's rights to seek counseling without parental consent, public schools' right to test students for drugs or search for weapons without students' consent, public schools' right to distribute condoms, parents' rights to be informed of teens' receipt of condoms from schools, and returning runaways to their homes;

2. **Community involvement**, including sports, clubs, religious organizations, participation in community problem-solving, perceptions of citizens' ability to influence local government, and length of time resided in the community;
3. **Lane County benchmark goals and priorities**, including assessment of absolute and relative importance of decreasing child abuse and neglect, teen pregnancy, child poverty, high school dropouts, juvenile crime and teen alcohol, drug, and tobacco use, as well as increasing kindergarten readiness, child care facilities, prenatal care, and child immunizations;
4. **Problem-solving behaviors, norms and attitudes**, including problems with children, disciplinary style, and help-seeking (i.e., how often a parent turns to others for help with child problems, including a spouse, friend, religious organization, school personnel, private professional, and social service agency);
5. **Family Resource Centers**, including whether respondents have heard of them before, likelihood of taking part in FRC activities (information, discussion groups, special events, one-on-one help, emergency food and clothing, professional services, youth recreation, child care), and where a local FRC should be located;
6. **Employers' "family friendliness,"** including the respondent's ability to take time off for family emergencies or events, telecommuting, and on-site child care;
7. **American family questions**, replicated from a national survey, concerning the breakdown of traditional values, government involvement, and strengthening the family by making divorce harder to get, increasing legal pressure on divorced parents for child support, providing more family planning services, and increasing government help with preschools and child care;
8. **Household composition and focal child**, including child age, sex, relationship to respondent, health insurance, age appropriate questions such as child care (type, hours per week, ease finding), type of schooling, sports activities, parent-child involvement (meals, frequency of doing enjoyable things together); and
9. **Demographic and background information**, including health insurance, age, sex, race/ethnicity, marital status, education, employment, zip code, school district, and poverty level.

A facsimile of the survey instrument is provided in Section 2 of this documentation. All interviews were completely anonymous, and human subjects approval was obtained.¹

Sample and Data Collection

Interviewer training was conducted on February 27, 1996 (see Section 3 for interviewer instructions). Interviewing was conducted all times of the day and all days of the week (except Sunday morning) until the target sample size was achieved. Altogether, OSRL interviewers made 9,083 random-digit-dialed telephone calls to complete 806 interviews with heads of households age 18 and over between February 28 and March 9, 1996. All households in Lane County had an equal chance of being selected, excluding those without telephones (approximately 3.7% in Lane County). Four and one-half percent of all calls resulted in refusals (see Section 4 for the sample and response rate report). The average length of the interviews was 16 minutes.

Survey sampling errors are calculated to assist data users in assessing how much confidence to place in a particular survey result. Large random samples, as in this study, reduce sampling error. Results for survey

¹ N.B. This survey was adopted as a class project for the University of Oregon sociology graduate seminar Soc 665 "Survey Methods and Design" Winter term 1996. The students in the class took part in all aspects of the survey and sample design and implementation, working side-by-side with regular OSRL employees. Only trained OSRL interviewers, however, actually conducted the interviewing. Participating students included: Amy Barlow, Janet Carlson, Kean Chew, Craig Helmstetter, Lee Jones, Carolyn Peterson, Sadie Reynolds, Catherine Richards, Vassilis Dalakas, Martin Tusler, and Jill Weigt. During Spring term 1996, some of these students will conduct in-depth analyses of the survey data.

questions in which there is low variability also have less sampling error; for example, a variable with a 50/50 proportional split has wider confidence intervals than a variable with a 5/95 proportional split. For this study, the sampling error is ± 3.5 percentage points on a variable with a 50/50 proportional split (at the 95% confidence level). For a variable with a 5/95 proportional split, the sampling error is ± 1.6 percentage points.

A Demographic Portrait of the Sample

Geographically we organized the data by school districts in which respondents reported they live.² Forty-six percent of the sample is located in Eugene 4J, 18% in Springfield, 6% in south Lane County districts (Cottage Grove, Lorane, Dorena, Creswell, Crow-Applegate, Drain), 6% in rural west and central county districts (Harrisburg, Junction City, Monroe, Blachly, Triangle Lake, Fern Ridge), 5% in eastern county districts in the Cascades foothills (Lowell, Marcola, McKenzie, Oakridge-Westfir, Pleasant Hill), 5% in Bethel #52, 4% in districts close to the Pacific Ocean coast (Mapleton, Florence-Siuslaw, Reedsport-Gardner), and 10% of the sample did not know what school district they live in (Table 83). Seventy-two percent of respondents have lived in their communities more than 5 years, 22% 1-5 years, and 6% less than one year (Table 7).

Twenty-one percent of the sample live in single-person households, 35% in households with two persons, 19% with three, 15% with four, 7% with five, and 3% with six or more. Among all households, 61% have no children, 16% have one child, 15% have two, 5% have three, and 3% have four or more. Based upon household size, respondents were asked whether their household income fell above or below the exact level of household income for poverty thresholds.³ Overall, 13% of respondents' households live below the federal poverty level.⁴

In households with more than one adult, interviewers randomly chose one to speak with (calling back if necessary to reach that person). Sixty-two percent of the randomly chosen adults were female. Eighty-eight percent were white, 2.6% Hispanic, 2.4% mixed, 2.1% Asian and Pacific Islander, 2.2% American Indian, and 0.2% Black; for analysis, Blacks were merged with mixed. Nine percent of respondents were ages 18-24, 17% 25-34, 27% 35-44, 19% 45-54, 10% 55-64, and 18% age 65 and older. Respondents' educational attainment was 6% less than 12th grade, 23% a high school diploma or GED, 34% some college, 7% an associates degree, 19% a bachelors degree, and 10% an advanced degree. Respondents' marital statuses comprised 54% married, 17% never married, 18% divorced, 7% widowed, 1.5% cohabiting, and 1.4% separated. Respondents' labor force status included 61% employed, 17% retired, 10% keeping house, 5% students, and 7% other. Among those employed, half were paid hourly, one third were on salary, and 17% were paid in tips, by commission, in kind, or a combination. Thirteen percent have no health insurance, but 76% of those with no health insurance live in households above poverty level.

In addition to data on individual respondents and their households, data also were collected on 311 children. In households with more than one child, a "focal child" was chosen randomly. The children were 48% male and 52% female. Their ages were 0-4 28%, 5-10 29%, 11-13 15%, and 14-17 28%. The child's relationship to the survey respondent was 87% daughter or son (natural or adopted), 5% stepchild, 5% grandchild, and 3% other (i.e., other relative, non-relative, or sibling). Ninety-three percent of the children are covered by some form of health insurance (including 15% Oregon Health Plan and Medicare), but 15% of respondents with children in the household say that their insurance does not adequately cover their family's routine health needs. Fifty-six percent of the respondents say that they eat one meal or less each week with the focal child.

² In the computer data files, zip code is also available.

³ Current federal poverty thresholds by household size are \$7,740 for single-person households, \$10,030 for 2 persons, \$12,590 for 3 persons, \$15,510 for 4 persons, \$17,710 for 5 persons, \$20,270 for 6 persons, and \$2,560 for each additional person

⁴ Note that 13% below poverty is likely to be an underestimate in a telephone survey. Even though over 96.3% of Lane County households are estimated to have telephones, poor, rural and minority households are likely to be somewhat underrepresented in telephone surveys, due to lower rates of telephone subscription among these groups.

The median times in the preceding four weeks that respondents reported having “an especially enjoyable time together” with the focal child is 14, or about three or four times per week.

Among children ages 0-12, 44% are in child care, including 14.1% in day care centers, 6.3% receiving paid care in their own home, 6.3% receiving paid care in a non-relative’s home, 2.4% receiving paid care in a relative’s home, and 7.8% receiving unpaid care of various sorts. The median number of hours in child care each week is 20 (that is, half of all children age 12 and younger spend 20 hours or less in child care and half spend more than 20 hours in child care per week). Twenty-nine percent of respondents said that finding child care was “very easy,” 25% said “somewhat easy,” 27% said “somewhat hard,” and 16% said “very hard.” Among school-age children, 85% attend public schools, 7% attend private schools, and 4% are home-schooled. Sixty-five percent of children have taken part in some form of organized sports activities in the previous year.

Survey Results

This presentation of the survey results is organized around the first seven survey subject areas identified on pages 1 and 2. Readers with the long version of this report may refer to the banner tables in Section 5 for more detail.⁵ In the banner tables, all questions asked in the survey were cross-tabulated with fifteen key variables (length of time lived in community; school district; number of children in household; poverty level; respondent’s sex, age, race, education, employment, method of pay, and marital status; comfort asking for help with a child; political efficacy; religious participation; and community participation). The banner data include counts and percentages for each question overall and for each row and column of the cross-tabulation. Narrative responses to open-ended questions are provided in Section 6. Codes developed for those responses are provided in Section 7, and the coded narratives are also included at the end of the banners (Tables 93-101).

Children’s and Parents’ Rights

In this group of questions, we examined children’s rights in relation to their parents, parents’ rights in relation to their child, and both children’s and parents’ relationship to schools.

Fully 90% of the survey respondents “generally agree” that children’s opinions should be taken into account in family decision making (Table 1). In addition, 72% believe that teenagers should be able to seek counseling for family problems without their parents’ consent (Table 3). Over half, 56%, believe that “under most circumstances, runaway children should be returned to their parents’ home” (Table 6).

Regarding children’s privacy, just over half, 53%, “generally disagree” with the statement “It’s okay for parents to search their children’s belongings whenever they please;” 35% “generally agree” and 11% say “it depends” (Table 2). But when presented with a situation in which an adult friend thinks her son may be smoking marijuana, 60% think it is a “good decision” for her to search his room for the drug while he is at school (Table 33).

In public school settings, 49% agree and 46% disagree that schools should be allowed to test students for drug use without students’ consent, with 4% saying “it depends” (Table 4). But 80% agree that schools should be able to search students for weapons without students’ consent, with 14% disagreeing and 5% saying “it depends” (Table 5). Related to children’s privacy issues in the previous paragraph, 69% of the survey respondents approved of high school nurses giving condoms to students who ask for them; 26% disapproved and 3% said “it depends” (Table 34). Moreover, 53% believe that the nurse should not inform parents when their teenage children ask for condoms; 42% think the nurse should inform, and 2% say “it depends” (Table 35).

⁵ The banner tables also may be found at OSRL’s World Wide Web site: <http://darkwing.uoregon.edu/~osrl>.

Community Involvement

In asking community-related questions, we let respondents determine their own definition of “community.” For some, the term refers to the geographic area in which they live; for others it may refer to their church and private church school, whose members draw from several geographical areas. This subjective definition of community was used throughout the survey because it is more reliable and consistent than imposing an “objective” definition of community.⁶

Overall, the survey respondents have participated in many facets of community life. Forty-one percent take part in the activities of a religious organization (Table 8), 33% take part in organized sports (Table 9), and 45% belong to other clubs or organizations in their communities (Table 10).

Feelings of political efficacy in Lane County are relatively high. One quarter of those interviewed feel that people like themselves have “a lot” of influence over local government decisions in their communities, 44% reported “some” influence, 23% said “a little,” and 6% said “none at all” (Table 11). In contrast, in national surveys in the 1980s, just 35% agreed with the statement “The average person has much to say about running local government.” Political efficacy in Lane County is related to community involvement. Fully 57% reported that they had “worked with others in [their] community to try to solve a community problem.” Those who have taken part in community problem solving were more likely to say that people like themselves have influence over local government decisions.

Lane County Benchmark Goals and Priorities

The survey instrument framed Lane CCF’s Benchmarks as “a list of goals for families and children in Lane County.” For each of the dozen benchmarks, respondents were asked how important the goal is to them. Then, for a subset of related benchmarks, they were asked which one they think is most important for their community. Note that their community is likely to be smaller than the entire county.

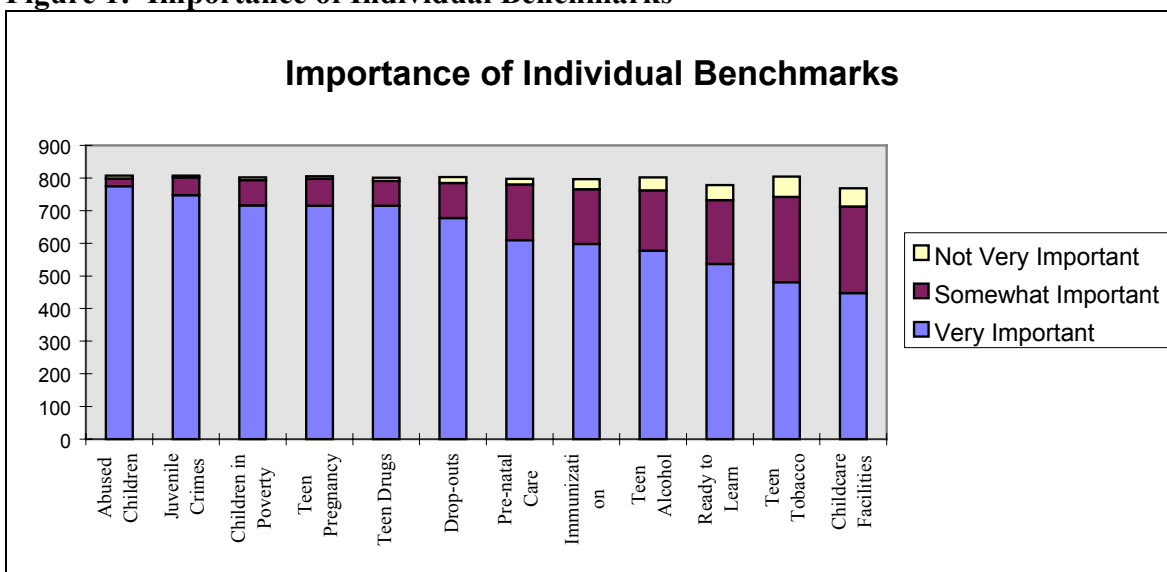
Overwhelming majorities think each of the benchmarks is “very important,” although subtle variations are clear (see Figure 1, Tables 13-16, 18-20, 22-26). Specifically, the “very important” responses include 96% to reduce the number of abused and neglected children in Lane County, 93% to reduce the number of juvenile crimes, 89% to reduce the number of children living in poverty, 89% to reduce the pregnancy rate for girls ages 10 to 17, 89% to reduce the number of teenagers who use drugs, 84% to decrease the number of high school dropouts, 76% to increase the number of women who get prenatal care, 74% to increase the number of preschoolers who are adequately immunized, 72% to reduce the number of teenagers who use alcohol, 66% to increase the number of children ready to take part in kindergarten successfully, 60% to reduce the number of teens who use tobacco, and 55% to increase the number of child care facilities.

Some regional variations exist within the county in the proportion of respondents saying these benchmark goals are “very important.” For example, kindergarten readiness was “very important” to 78% of respondents in south Lane County compared to two-thirds overall. Child poverty was of greater concern in the mountain areas (93%) and Eugene (91%) than south Lane County (80%). The percentage believing that increasing child care facilities was “very important” varied from 42% in the mountain areas to 62% on the coast. Ninety-five percent of those in the Bethel area thought reducing teen pregnancy was “very important” compared to 89% overall. Similarly, 93% in the Bethel area and on the coast thought that reducing high school dropouts is “very important” compared to 80% in Eugene. Reducing teen alcohol use varied from 65% in Eugene to 80% in Bethel, Springfield and south Lane County. Reducing teen tobacco use varied

⁶ For detail on the question “What does ‘community’ mean to you?” see the Supplemental Survey to the 1994 Oregon Population Survey, Volume 8.

from 44% in the mountain areas to 64% in south Lane County and 63% in Springfield. Increasing prenatal care varied from 67% in Springfield to 80% in Eugene.

Figure 1: Importance of Individual Benchmarks



Respondents had little trouble identifying which benchmarks they thought most important to their community. When asked to choose among the benchmarks concerning child abuse, child poverty, kindergarten readiness and child care facilities, two-thirds gave top priority to reducing child abuse and neglect, 18% chose reducing child poverty, 9% chose increasing child care facilities, and 4% chose increasing kindergarten readiness (Table 17). When asked to choose among the benchmarks concerning teen pregnancy, high school drop-outs and juvenile crime, 46% gave top priority to reducing juvenile crime, 33% chose reducing the teen pregnancy rate, and 17% chose reducing the number of high school drop-outs (Table 21). When asked to choose among reducing teen alcohol, tobacco and drug use, or improving preschool immunization and prenatal care, 55% gave top priority to reducing teen drug use, 20% chose increased prenatal care, 9% chose reducing teen alcohol use, 8% chose increased immunizations, and 2% chose reducing teen tobacco use (Table 27).

Again, however, substantial regional variations exist in these choices. Among the first four benchmark goals (child abuse, child poverty, kindergarten readiness, and child care facilities), child abuse was the top priority of respondents in each of the seven county regions, but it varied from 59% on the coast to 78% in Bethel (Figure 2). Decreasing child poverty was the second most mentioned priority in all regions except the coast, where increasing child care facilities took second place.

Among the second three benchmarks in which respondents were asked to name their top priority (teen pregnancy, high school drop-outs, and juvenile crime), reducing juvenile crime was the top priority overall, but within the seven regions it varied widely, from 31% at the coast to 59% in the mountain areas (Figure 3). The percentage of respondents indicating that teen pregnancy was the top priority among these three benchmarks ranged from 22% in the mountain areas to 40% in Bethel and south Lane County. Reducing high school dropouts varied from 8% in the West/Central areas of the county to 21% at the coast.

Figure 2: Most Important Benchmarks 1 to 4, by Region

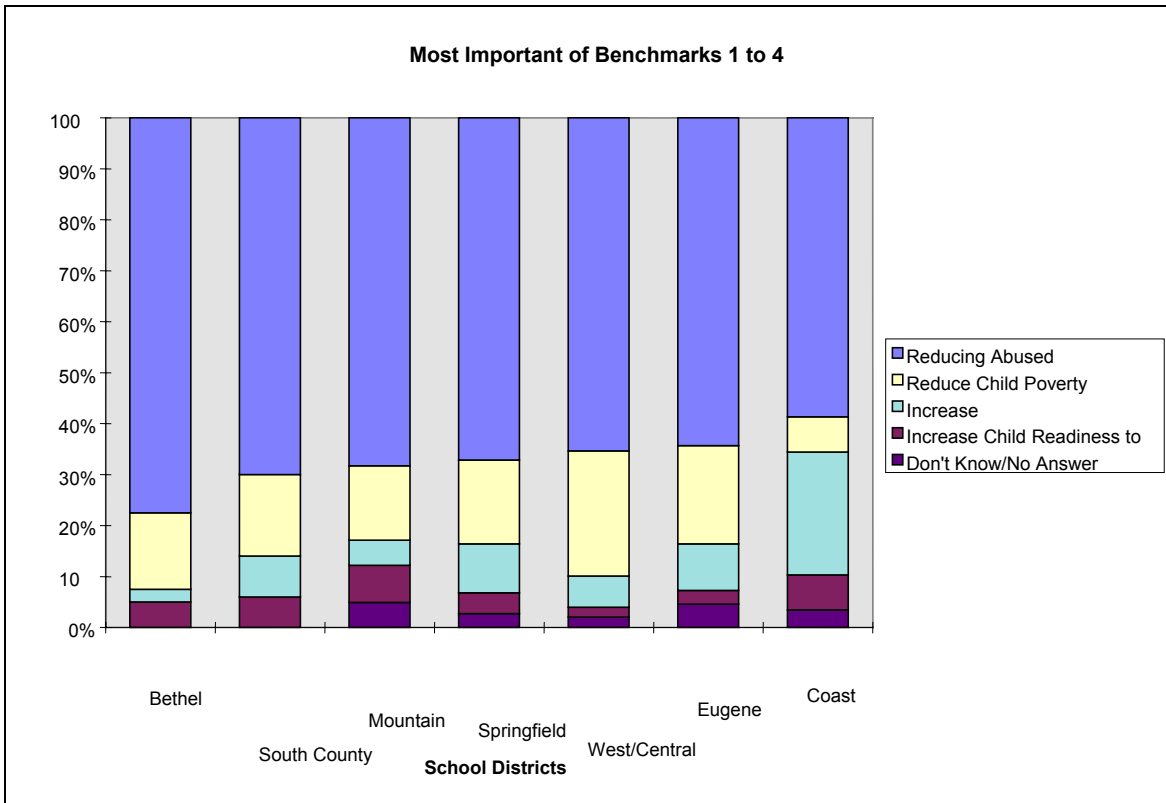
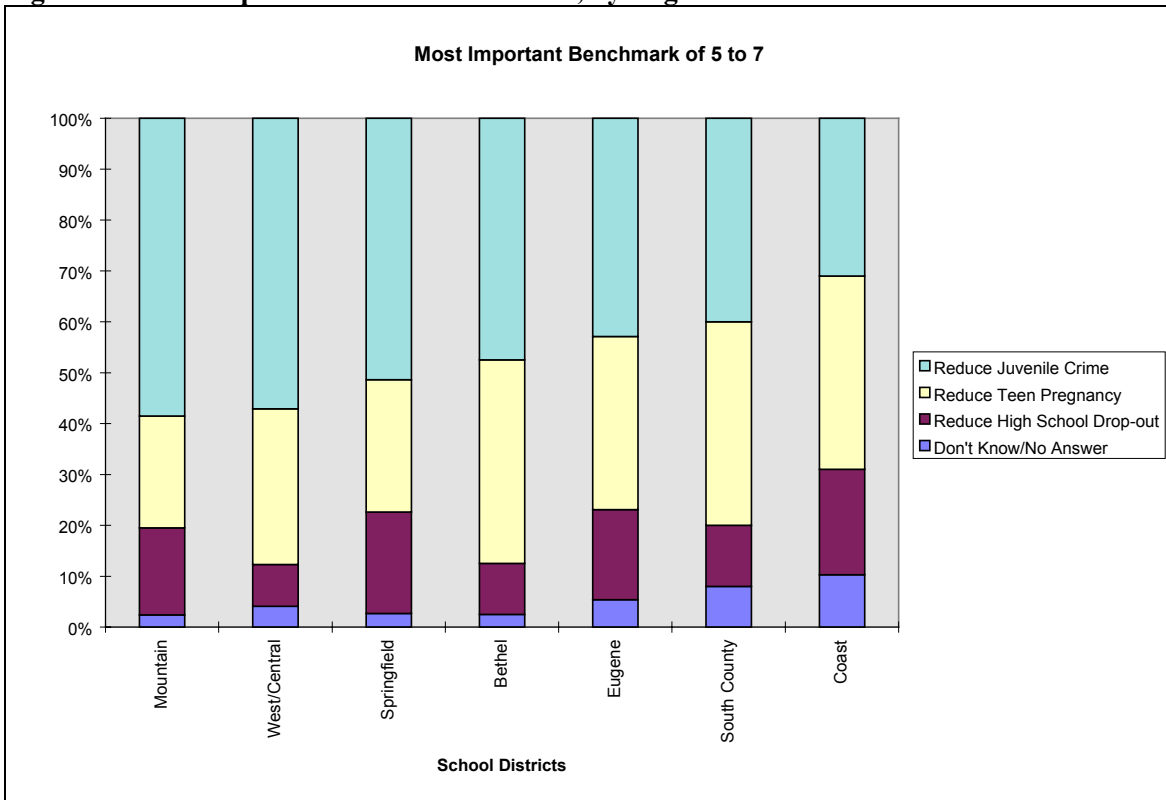
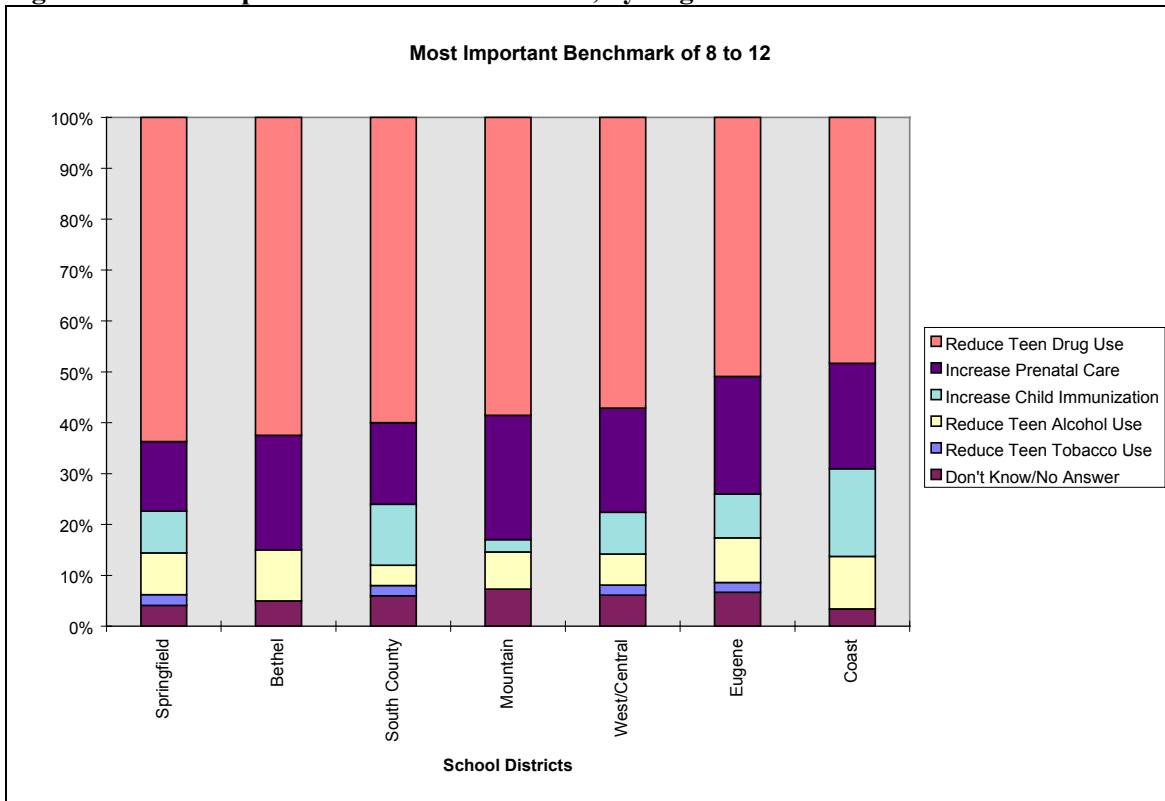


Figure 3: Most Important Benchmarks 5 to 7, by Region



In the third group of benchmarks in which respondents were asked to name their top priority (reducing teen alcohol, tobacco and drug use, increasing preschool immunization and prenatal care), reducing teen drug use ranged from the top priority ranking of 48% of those on the coast to 64% of those in Springfield (Figure 4). Increasing prenatal care varied from 16% at the coast to 24% in the mountain areas. Increasing preschool immunizations was the top priority of 17% of coastal respondents, but 0% of Bethel respondents.

Figure 4: Most Important Benchmarks 8 to 12, by Region



Problem-solving Behaviors, Norms and Attitudes

One of Lane CCF’s key objectives is to build healthy families and children by creating supportive social structures which keep problems from developing. Part of reaching this goal is to make help-seeking normative, rather than shameful. Toward that goal, this survey developed baseline questions to assess the extent to which help-seeking is regarded as reasonable or acceptable.

Respondents with a focal child were first assured that “Most everyone has problems with their children at one time or another.” Then they were asked, “In the past four weeks, how often did you fight or argue or have a lot of difficulty with [that] child?” Just over half (51%) had had four or more problems with the focal child in the 4 weeks preceding the survey, nearly one-fifth (19%) had problems with the child on more than half the days of the month, and one-fifth had had no problems with the child (Table 99).

In responses to an open-ended question, “What were your problems or difficulties about?”, 23% of respondents mentioned issues of obedience, such as not following rules (Table 100). Other issues included chores (12%), school (9%), bedtime (6%), friends and social activities (4%), and infant and toddler issues, such as teething and the “terrible two’s” (8%). When asked how they discipline that child, 33% first

mentioned verbal disciplinary techniques (discussion, lecture, yelling), 31% mentioned time-outs, 22% mentioned loss of privileges, and 8% said their children were too young for discipline (Table 101).⁷

Fully 82% of the respondents “generally agree” that “when parents have a problem with their child, they should try as hard as possible to find a solution within the family, rather than seeking help outside the family” (Table 28). However, 94% also said that they would “feel comfortable asking for help if I was having a serious problem with my child” (Table 31).⁸ Moreover, 82% disagreed with the statement “Parents who cannot work out their children’s and teenagers’ problems in their own homes are not doing a good job raising their kids” (Table 32).

When asked how they deal with problems with the “focal child” in their home, 89% said that they “often” work through the problems on their own; 42% “often” and 36% “sometimes” turn to other adults in the household (although 7% reported no other adults in the household); and 45% “sometimes” turn to neighbors, friends or family members outside their household, although 46% “never” do. When asked if they had ever gone outside the family for assistance, 23% indicated they had turned to people in a religious organization, 46% had gone to school teachers or school counselors, 38% to private professionals, like a pediatrician, psychologist or counselor, and 8% to social service agencies (Tables 51-57).

All survey respondents were presented with the following vignette regarding child discipline:

“Say that you are in the check-out line at a grocery store. Behind you, a mother and her 6-year-old daughter are arguing because the girl keeps asking for candy and the mother says no. Finally, the mother slaps the girl across the face, hard enough to leave a red mark.”

Respondents were asked if, under the circumstances, they think the mother’s action was reasonable. No matter what their answer, they were asked an open-ended question describing why. Finally, they were asked if they would intervene.

Fully 91% of respondents felt that the action of the mother in the vignette was not reasonable, 5% said it was reasonable, and 3% volunteered that “it depends” (Table 36). Respondents in Eugene and Springfield were substantially less likely to call the action reasonable, as were those without children in the home, women, those less than age 55, and those with higher education.

Among those who said it was unreasonable, 26% said that it is never reasonable to hit a child, 21% urged alternatives to physical discipline, 15% said that such a physical reaction is too strong for the situation, 11% said that the mother was out of control, 5% said that slapping is okay but it should not be done so hard, and 15% said that slapping in the face is not okay (Table 95). Among those who said the mother’s action was reasonable, 27% said the girl knew the consequences of her behavior, 27% made comments related to discipline’s importance, 17% said she was out of control, 12% said she needed to learn her lesson, and 12% said that it was just reasonable to hit under the circumstances, as a last option (Table 94). Among those who volunteered “it depends,” 46% said they would have to know the entire situation, 33% said it depends on the child’s personality, and 21% advocate discipline but not slapping in the face (Table 96).

Forty-five percent of respondents would say or do something if they saw the mother slapping the child, 37% would not, and 15% volunteered that “it depends” (Table 37).

Family Resource Centers

⁷ A reminder: Narrative replies to open-ended questions may be found in Section 6.

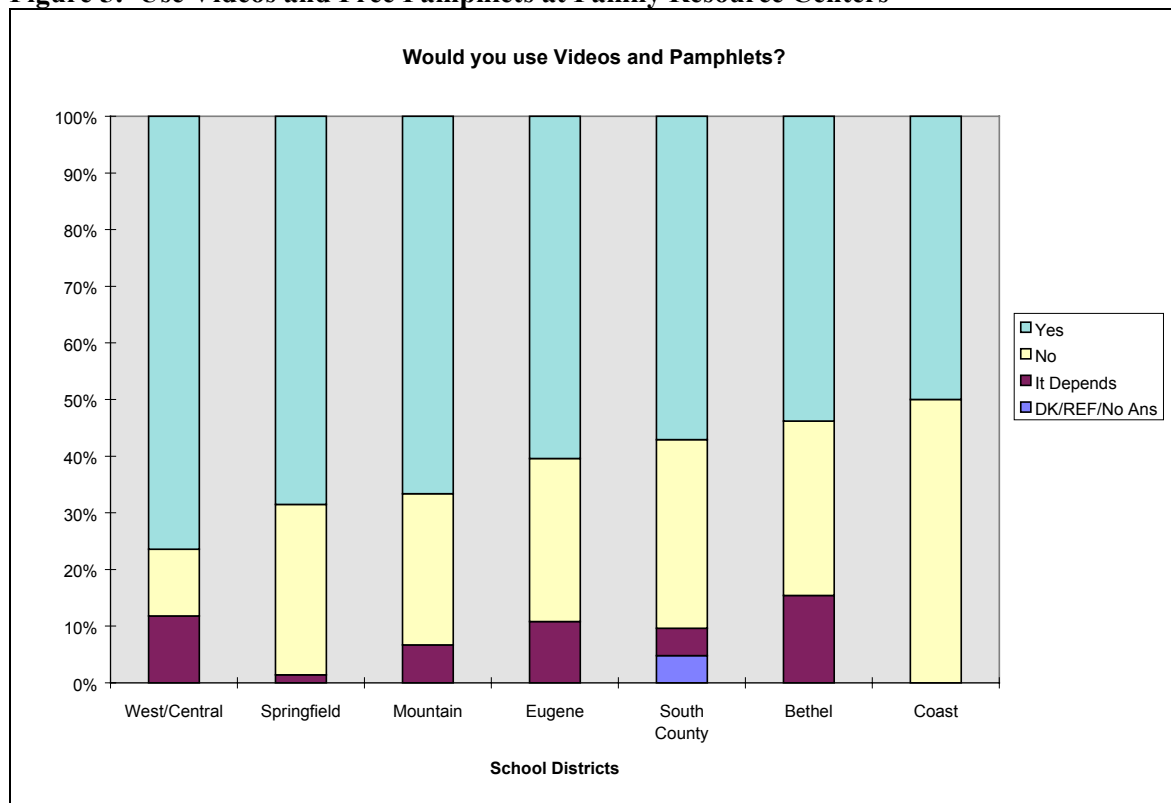
⁸ Note: Non-parents were asked to answer “If you were a parent...”

The development of Family Resource Centers (FRCs) is key to Lane CCF’s goals. Some FRCs in Lane County are already being developed. The goal of this section of questions was to establish how many people have heard about FRCs, how many families with children might be interested in various services FRCs could offer, and where people would prefer FRCs to be located.

Overall, 26% of the survey respondents had heard of FRCs already; the extent to which they may confuse FRCs with other family activity centers in their communities, however, is not known (Table 58). Fifty-four percent of respondents in Bethel had heard of an FRC, compared to 35% in west/central Lane County, 33% in south Lane County, 32% in Springfield, 22% in Eugene, 10% at the coast, and 7% in the mountain communities. Younger respondents and women were more likely to have heard about them. Interviewers read respondents a list of services that could be offered at FRCs and were asked if they, or members of their household, would use these resources now or in the near future. The percents responding “yes” to each item are provided below, with notes on who is most likely to report an interest in using the service:

1. **Videos and free pamphlets about things like parenting skills, nutrition and self-esteem: 62%**, especially those who have lived in their community for more than 5 years, those in Springfield, west/central Lane County and mountain areas, those below poverty level, those with one child, persons less than age 34, women, and those with a high school education or less (Figure 5, Table 59).

Figure 5: Use Videos and Free Pamphlets at Family Resource Centers



2. **Casual discussion groups on parenting issues: 56%**, especially those who have lived in their communities less than one year, those who live at the coast, in Springfield, in west/central Lane County and

mountain areas, below poverty level, ages 25-34 and 45-54, women, with high school education or some college, and those never married or separated (Figure 6, Table 60).

3. **Special events, such as a family recreation night: 74%**, especially those who have lived in the community less than one year, those in Bethel, west/central Lane County and mountain areas, age 34 and younger, male, with less than high school education, unmarried, and not employed (Figure 7, Table 61).

4. **One-on-one help with things like homework and computers: 66%**, especially persons outside of Eugene and south Lane County, who have four or more children, are below poverty level, ages 18-24, have a high school diploma or some college, not employed, not married, and who would not generally be comfortable asking for help with a child (Figure 8, Table 62).

5. **Emergency food or clothing: 39%**, especially respondents in west/central Lane County, below the poverty level, ages 18-34, female, with a high school education or less, and not married (Figure 9, Table 63).

6. **Services from professionals, such as nurses or counselors: 61%**, especially in Springfield, the coast, and west/central lane County, who have just one child, living below poverty, ages 18-34 or 55 and older, women, persons with a high school diploma or some college, homemakers and retirees, and unmarried respondents (Figure 10, Table 64).

7. **Youth recreation activities: 86%**, especially those at the coast and south lane County, below poverty level, with some college or an associate’s degree, single/unmarried persons, and those who are not comfortable asking for help with a problem child (Figure 11, Table 65).

Figure 6: Use Casual Discussion Groups at Family Resource Centers

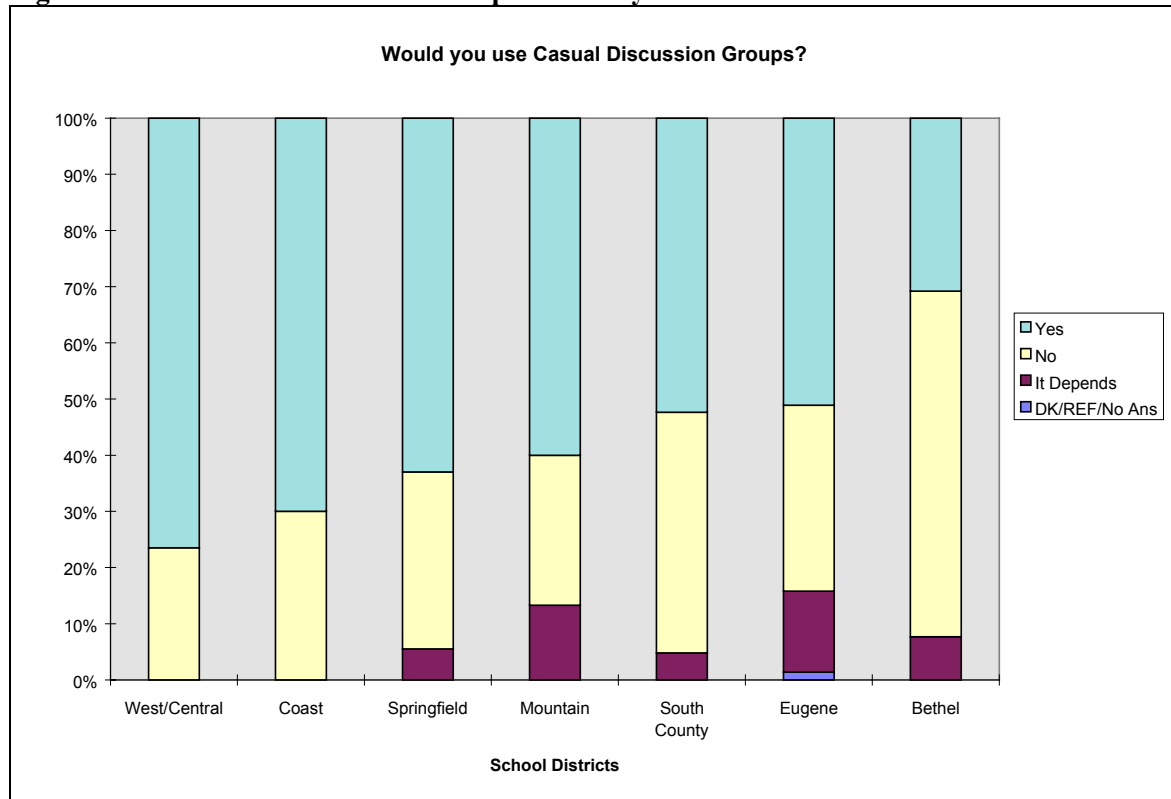


Figure 7: Use Special Events, Family Recreation Night, at Family Resource Centers

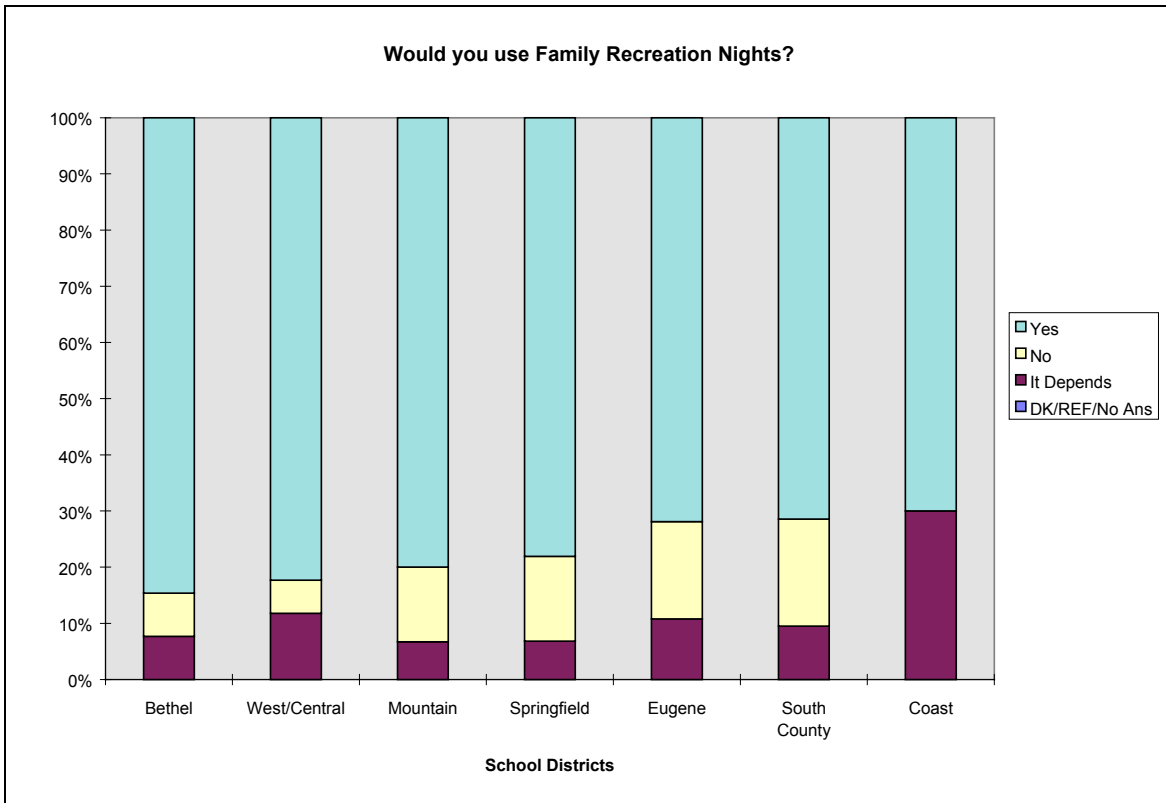


Figure 8: Use One-on-One Help at Family Resource Centers

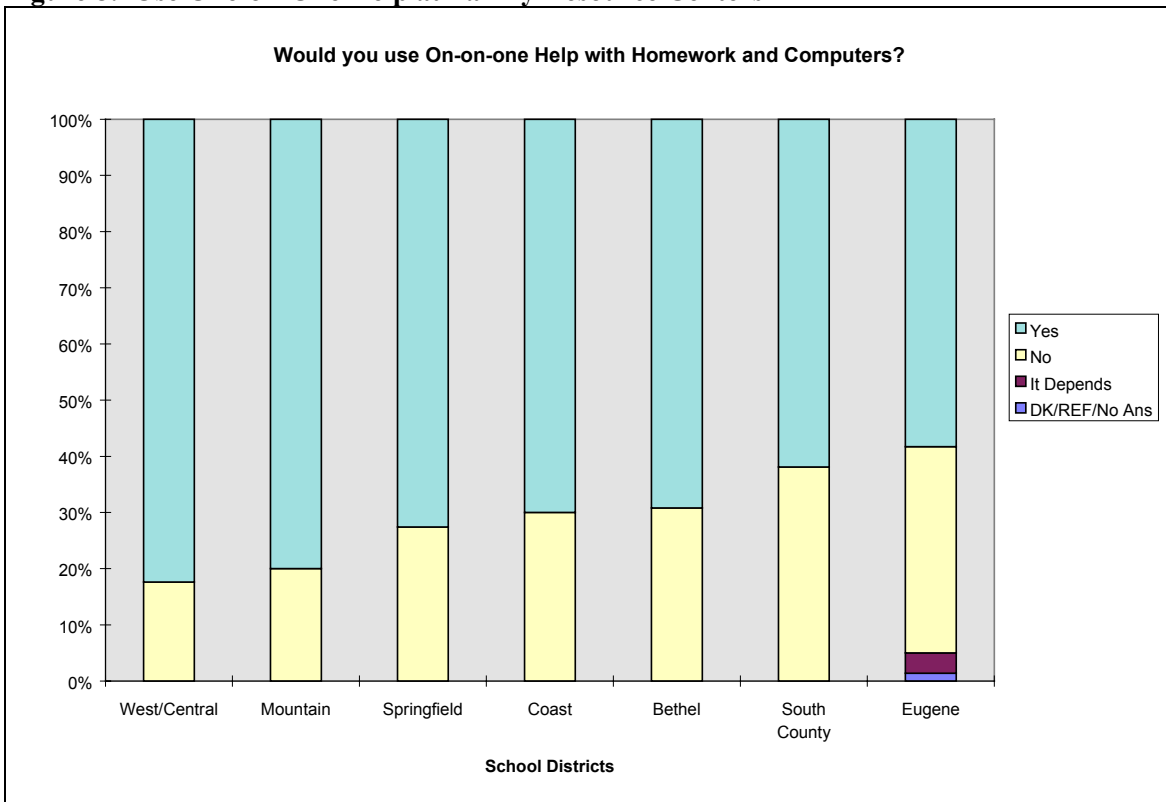


Figure 9: Use Emergency Food or Clothing at Family Resource Centers

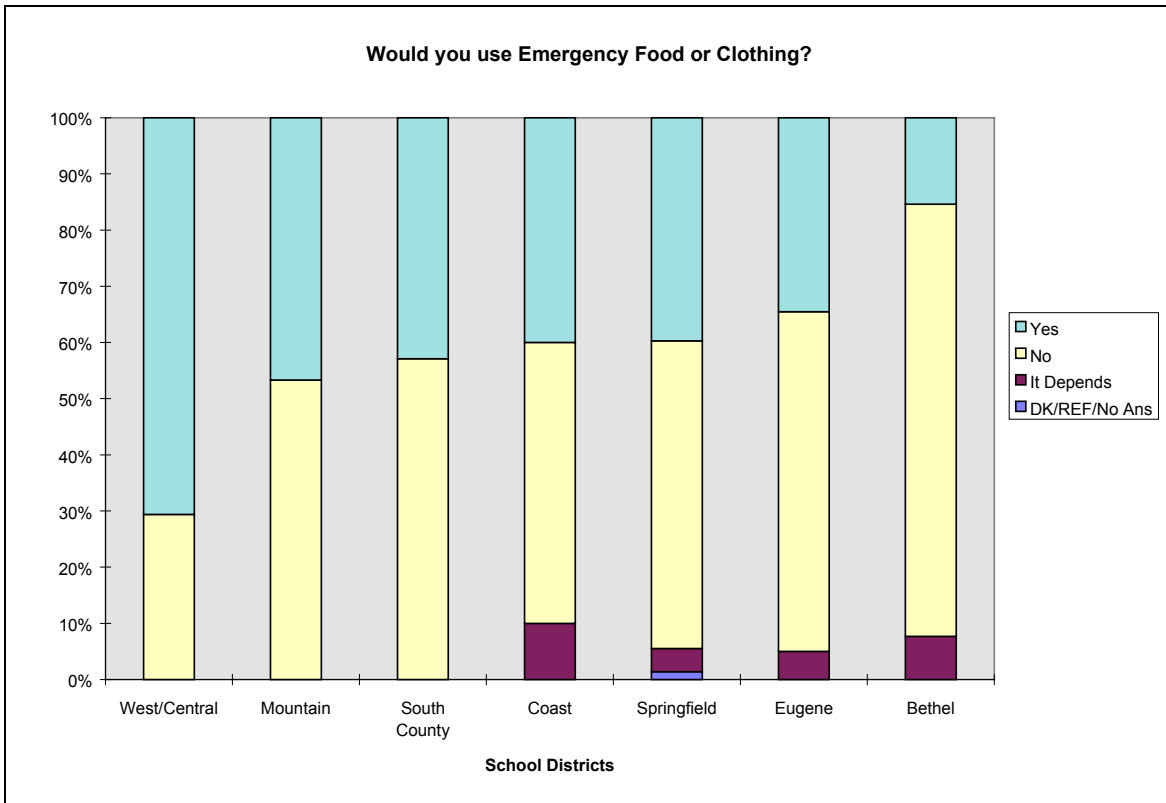


Figure 10: Use Services from Professionals at Family Resource Centers

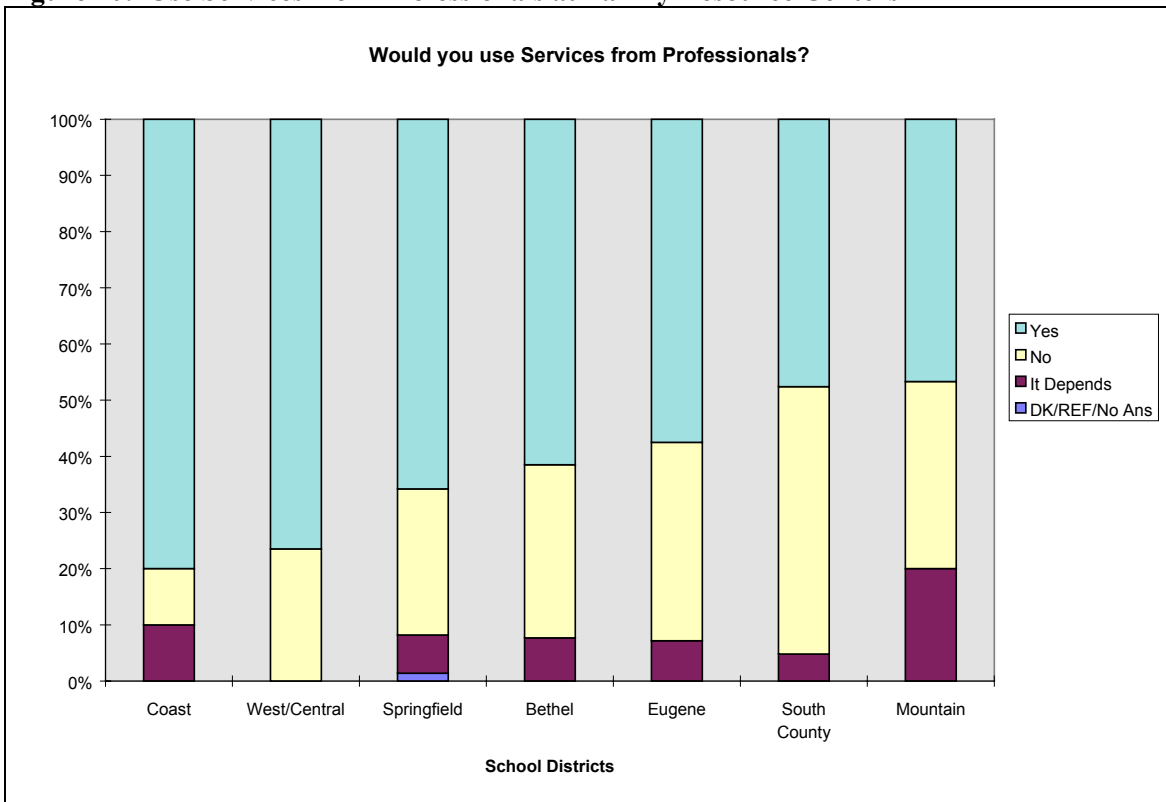


Figure 11: Use Youth Recreation Activities at Family Resource Centers

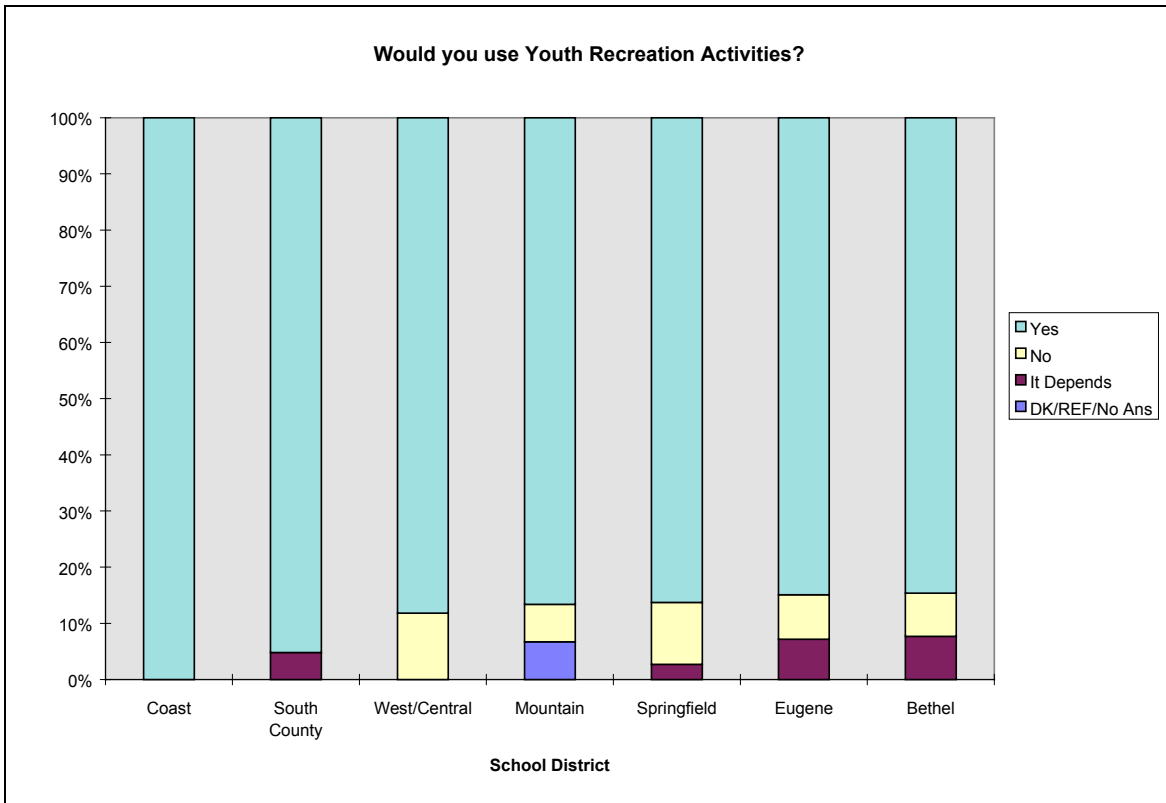
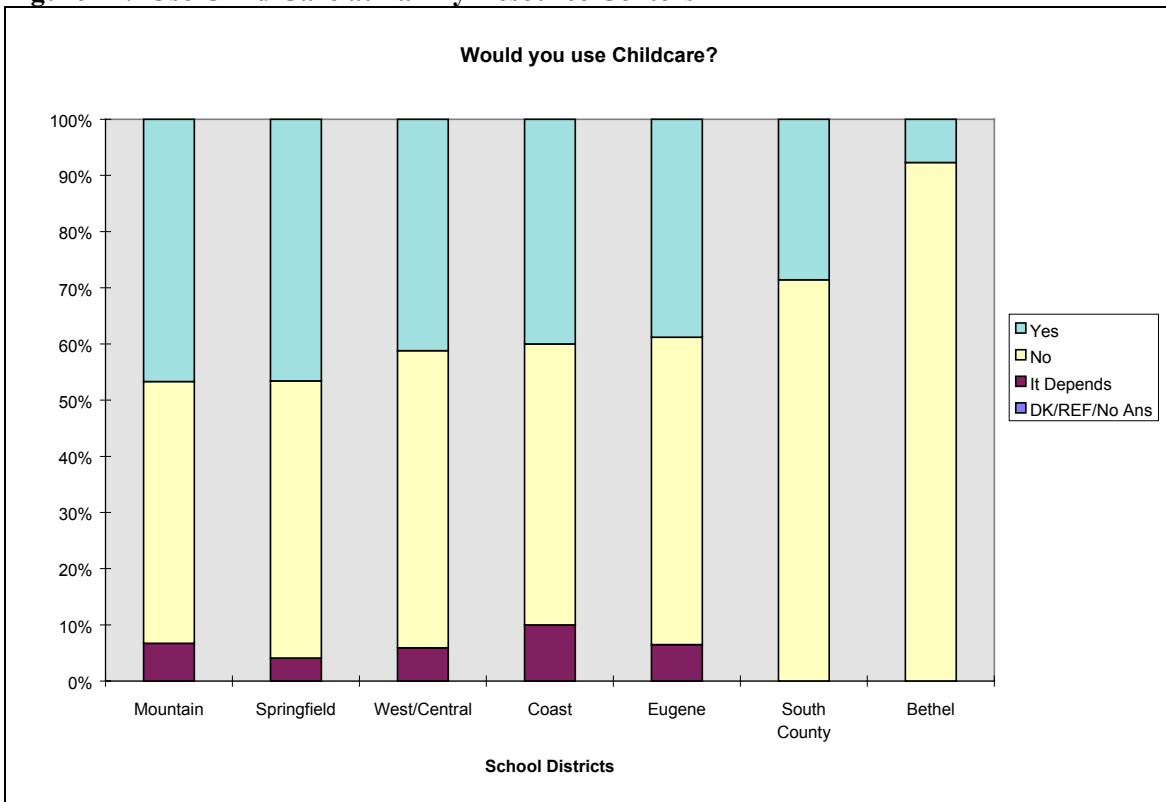


Figure 12: Use Child Care at Family Resource Centers



8. **Child care: 39%**, especially those who have lived in the community less than one year, in Springfield and the mountain communities, with four or more children in the family, below poverty level,

ages 18-24, not employed, never married or divorced, not comfortable asking for help with a child, not involved with a religious organization, and believe that average people have little influence over local government decisions (Figure 12, Table 66).

Respondents who had worked with others to solve a community problem did not show greater interest in taking part in FRC activities than those who had not.

A plurality of respondents would prefer that FRCs be located at neighborhood schools (46%), followed by community centers (37%), and city centers (13%) (Table 67). Those geographical areas most strongly preferring FRCs in a neighborhood school location are Springfield (59%), Bethel (54%) and Eugene (49%). Those areas most strongly preferring a community center are the mountain areas (53%), south Lane County (43%), west/central Lane County (41%), and the coast (40%). Those most preferring a city center are the coast (30%), south Lane County (14%) and Springfield (14%).

Employers' "Family Friendliness"

This group of questions was designed to assess how amenable local employers' formal and informal policies are to the everyday contingencies of family life. Three-fifths of the persons surveyed were employed at the time of the interview, including approximately 80% of those aged 25-54, and 70% of men and 56% of women. Nearly half of those below poverty level were employed (49%).

Of those employed, 59% worked for a private company, 19% for federal, state or local government, and 22% for themselves. Only those who were not self-employed were asked the family friendliness questions, since we anticipated that self-employed persons have greater flexibility to adapt to family demands.

Half of the employed persons in the sample were paid hourly, 33% on salary, and 17% in tips, commissions, in-kind payments, or a combination of the above. Twenty-nine percent of the respondents were employed 45 or more hours per week, 38% 36-44 hours, 17% 21-35 hours, and 14% 20 hours or less.

Respondents' employers show unexpectedly high levels of family friendliness. Respondents were told "We are interested in family-related policies your employer may have, whether or not you have used them." From there, more specific questions were asked, as shown below:

1. If a member of your family suddenly became sick or injured in the middle of your work day, would you be able to leave work to take care of him or her? 96% yes (Table 72).
2. If a family member had a special event that you needed to attend in the middle of a work day, could you attend if you made arrangements in advance? PROBE: An event such as a parent-teacher conference, sports game, wedding, funeral, or arriving home after a big trip. 95% yes (Table 73).
3. Does your employer allow working at home sometimes, or telecommuting on a regular basis? 28% yes (Table 74).
4. Will your employer let you use sick leave or vacation time if a family member got very ill? 88% yes, but 4% also have no sick leave (Table 75).
5. Does your employer have an on-site child care program? 11% yes (Table 76).
6. Do you think people at work who use any of these policies are seen as less committed to the job than people who don't? 12% yes (Table 77).

Those persons paid on salary are most likely to receive the benefit of employers' family friendliness.

American Family Questions

At the end of the survey, respondents were asked a group of questions which parallel a recent national survey. The national survey had a somewhat complex background.

459 delegates, supposedly constituting a representative national sample, were chosen by the National Opinion Research Center, University of Chicago, to attend the National Issues Convention (NIC), sponsored by the University of Texas and the Presidential Libraries, held January 18-21, 1996 in Austin, Texas. Each delegate completed a pre-deliberation survey. Then they read briefing materials on the family, economy and foreign policy prepared by Public Agenda and the Kettering Foundation, and participated in small-group discussions and televised forums with policy experts, four Republican Presidential candidates, and Vice President Al Gore. The delegates then filled out a post-deliberation survey before returning home.

To the extent possible, OSRL replicated the NIC questions concerning the family. We found in pretesting, however, that many Lane County residents balked at particular wordings and answer categories, and so adjustments were made as necessary.

Overall, 56% of the Lane County survey respondents said that the breakdown of traditional American values is the biggest problem for American families, 32% said economic pressures, and 9% volunteered that both were problems.

To strengthen American families, 51% believe that making divorce harder to get would not be useful at all, but 66% think that increasing legal pressures on divorced parents for child support would be very useful, 56% think that more family planning services would be very useful, and 49% think that greater government help with child care and preschool would be very useful.

A plurality of Lane County respondents think that government has not done enough for families through child care, family planning and education at 44%, compared to 39% saying government has been too involved.

The national comparisons indicate that Lane County residents' opinions are generally between the NIC delegates' pre- and post-deliberations.

Below are selected pre- and post-deliberation survey results from the NIC questionnaire, as well as the Lane County results (Tables 85-90).⁹

1. Some people think that the biggest problem for the American family is economic pressure. Others think that it is the breakdown of traditional American values. Which is closer to your view?

	NIC BEFORE	NIC AFTER	LANE COUNTY
Economic pressure	35.5%	50.7%	32.4%
Breakdown of values	57.6	47.7	55.6
Don't know	6.9	1.6	1.1
If volunteered: Both	n.r.	n.r.	8.9
If volunteered: Other	n.r.	n.r.	2.0

⁹ n.r. indicates "not reported."

2. I'm going to read a list of items that some people think would strengthen the family in this country. For each one, please tell me if, in your view, it would be very useful, somewhat useful, or not useful at all (in strengthening the family). First, changing the law to make a divorce harder to get.

	NIC <u>BEFORE</u>	NIC <u>AFTER</u>	LANE <u>COUNTY</u>
Very useful	12.6%	17.2%	16.9%
Somewhat useful	23.5	39.5	29.9
Not useful at all	59.3	40.9	51.4
Don't know	4.7	2.3	1.9

3. What about increasing legal pressures on fathers for child support? [In Lane County: What about increasing legal pressures on divorced parents for child support?]

	NIC <u>BEFORE</u>	NIC <u>AFTER</u>	LANE <u>COUNTY</u>
Very useful	69.9%	84.5	66.4%
Somewhat useful	23.4	13.9	22.3
Not useful at all	5.1	0.7	9.4
Don't know	1.6	0.9	1.9

4. What about more family planning services?

	NIC <u>BEFORE</u>	NIC <u>AFTER</u>	LANE <u>COUNTY</u>
Very useful	44.8%	58.2%	55.6%
Somewhat useful	34.5	31.7	29.3
Not useful at all	14.8	7.7	12.5
Don't know	5.9	2.3	2.6

5. What about government help with child care and preschool?

	NIC <u>BEFORE</u>	NIC <u>AFTER</u>	LANE <u>COUNTY</u>
Very useful	45.3%	56.3%	49.4%
Somewhat useful	34.5	35.9	33.0
Not useful at all	17.4	6.3	15.3
Don't know	2.8	1.4	2.4

6. Some people think that government has become too involved with the family through social welfare and family planning programs. Others think that government has not done enough for the family through child care, family planning and education. Which is closer to your view?

	NIC <u>BEFORE</u>	NIC <u>AFTER</u>	LANE <u>COUNTY</u>
Govt too involved	41.3%	42.7%	39.0%
Govt not done enough	45.7	49.7	43.7
Don't know	13.0	7.7	5.2
If volunteered: Both	n.r.	n.r.	7.2
If volunteered: Other	n.r.	n.r.	5.0

Conclusions

The purpose of this survey was to develop a prototype instrument for the Oregon Commission on Children and Families that would assist the Commission in meeting its county-level database information and evaluation needs. This prototype survey was developed specifically with Lane CCF's information needs, strategies, and evaluation goals in mind.

The result of this prototype survey is an exceptionally rich source of current information on the behaviors, norms, attitudes and demographic characteristics of Lane County households, families and children. These data will serve as a baseline against which the Lane CCF can measure the effects of their planned public policy innovations, such as Family Resource Centers, over the next several years. As a prototype, this survey also serves as a model which other Oregon counties can use to guide their data collection efforts to address their unique goals and strategies for achieving those goals.