

# PAYNE COUNTY EVALUATION REPORT



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## CONTENTS

Executive Summary .....	2
Comparing County, State, and National Level Data .....	3
Population Characteristics .....	3
Household Characteristics .....	5
Health and Well-Being.....	6
Services Available .....	7
Survey Results .....	8
Description of the Sample .....	8
Location.....	9
Age.....	10
Race & Gender .....	10
Other Demographics .....	11
Accessing Services .....	12
Satisfaction .....	12
Reasons For Not Accessing Support Services.....	13
Seeking Advice .....	16
Themes of Survey Results .....	18
Transportation & Geographical Location of Payne County.....	18
Building on the Strengths of Health Care.....	18
Online Resources and Awareness.....	18
Qualitative Data: Individual Interviews .....	19
Services in Payne County .....	19
Services you wish you had that were not available.....	22
Difficulties in Accessing Services and Supports .....	22
Appendix A: Online Survey.....	23
Appendix B: Individual Interview Guide .....	30
Appendix C: Sample Recruitment Materials .....	32

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report captures the results of a study conducted as part of a partnership between Resilient Payne County, Stillwater Early Childhood Coalition, Payne County Department of Health, and Oklahoma State University. The purpose was to understand the availability, accessibility, and quality of services in Payne County. Further, this study also identified gaps in services that need to be addressed.

The study started in early 2021 with an online survey and continued to September 2021 with phone interviews. Respondents completed a 5-10 minute survey about the services they use, don't use, and challenges related to accessing those services. The first survey was taken on February 18, 2021, and the last survey was taken on April 7, 2021. From this list, people were emailed and called if they were interested in participating in the qualitative interviews. Follow-up interviews asked about the barriers to care and ease of accessing services throughout Payne County. These interviews started in August 2021 and concluded in September 2021.

### Survey Results Key Findings

- Two hundred nineteen individuals responded to the online survey about services that they used in Payne County.
- Respondents mostly came from Stillwater with lesser amounts from surrounding zip codes, including some outside Payne County.
- Most individuals were between the ages of 20 and 35, with young children under 11 years old.
- Respondents were predominantly female (84.47%) and mostly white (80.82%).
- Healthcare was the most accessed service, followed by emotional support from friends or professionals.
- Approximately half of the individuals used childcare services such as daycare or in-home care.
- Overall, people were completely satisfied with the received services.
  - Preschool services were the highest rated
  - Health Services and Nutritional Support Services were highly rated - less than 2% of the people who used health services or nutritional support services were not satisfied
  - Parenting Support was the only service in which less than half of the people who used it were completely satisfied, and 21% of people were not at all satisfied.
  - Financial support services and child care support services were also rated lower, with 12-13% of respondents being not at all satisfied
- Transportation was not a significant barrier to accessing services
- The location of services in Stillwater, central to Payne County, was beneficial to respondents and was utilized by individuals surrounding Payne County.
- Health care was highly rated, and overall, participants were satisfied
- Specialty health care was difficult to receive, resulting in people driving to Oklahoma City or Tulsa for services.
- Most respondents (70%) trusted their primary care doctors in making health care decisions
- Between 30-40% of individuals used online resources for making health care or parenting decisions
- There was some lack of awareness or understanding of some programs, particularly parenting support and nutrition services.

## COMPARING COUNTY, STATE, AND NATIONAL LEVEL DATA

### POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

Overall, the percentage of the population that is under five is similar between county, state, and national levels. Whereas the population under five is slowly growing at the state and national levels, the population in Payne County has stayed relatively consistent, trending slightly downwards in 2020. Payne County is also slightly more educated than the state or national levels, however, the percent of children under five who live below the poverty line is also typically higher than national levels, as is the pay disparity between single fathers and single mothers.

Table 1: Characteristics of Payne County

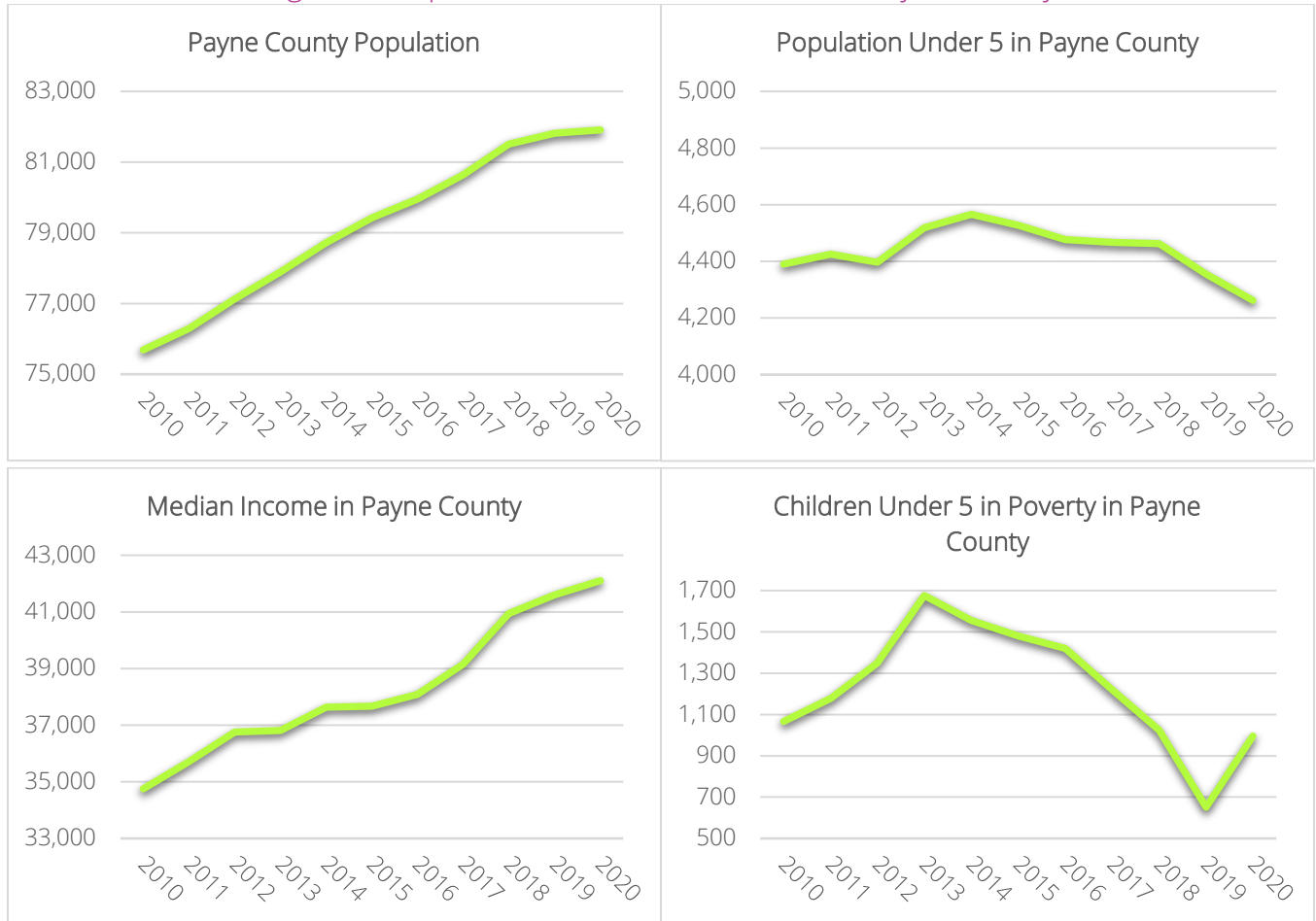
Population Characteristics	Payne County	Oklahoma	US
<b>Total Population</b>			
2020	81,912	3,986,639	331,893,745
2019	81,815	3,957,700	328,239,523
<b>Population under 5 years old</b>			
2020	4,262 (5.2%)	6.6%	5.2%
2019	4,355 (5.3%)	6.3%	4.8%
<b>Race<sup>1</sup></b>			
White (% under 5)	77.4% (4.9%)	61.4% (5.6%)	69.3% (5.4%)
Black (% under 5)	6.4% (8.3%)	7.8% (6.7%)	12.4% (6.6%)
American Indian/Alaska Native (% under 5)	3.9% (4.9%)	7.6% (7.4%)	0.81% (6.6%)
Asian (% under 5)	4.4% (4.8%)	2.2% (5.9%)	5.6% (4.8%)
Hispanic (% under 5)	8.2% (8.7%)	19.7% (11.6%)	17% (8.5%)
<b>Education</b>			
High school graduate or higher (2016-2020)	92.2%	88.6%	88.5%
Bachelor's degree or higher (2016-2020)	37.8%	26.1%	32.9%
<b>Income and Employment</b>			
Median Household Income	\$42,103	\$53,840	\$64,994
Median Income, married with children under 18	\$70,750	\$80,488	\$103,364
Median Income, male no spouse with children under 18	\$42,188	\$42,246	\$47,275
Median Income, female no spouse with children under 18	\$22,007	\$26,229	\$30,681
Unemployed with children under 6	4.5%	6.3%	5.6%
<b>Children Under 5 in Poverty</b>			
2020	995 (23.4%)	23.7%	19.1%
2019	651 (36.6%)	22.1%	20.3%
2018	1,024 (22.9%)	24.2%	21.1%

Source: the U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey

<sup>1</sup>Percentages may not add up to 100% because not all races are represented on the table, including individuals with two or more races.

The number of children under 5 years old living in poverty has been going down, however, it steeply increased in 2020. A factor that these graphs don't show is the increase in cost of living and cost of childcare.

Figure 1: Population Statistics Over Time in Payne County



## HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS

Table 2 below shows that the average family size is about the same at the county, state, and national levels. Payne County had higher levels of single parent households and higher levels of children living with their grandparents. Overall, childcare costs slightly less in Payne County than at the state or national level.

Table 2: Household Characteristics of Payne County, Oklahoma, and the United States

Household Characteristics	Payne County	Oklahoma	US
Average household size	2.35	2.57	2.61
Average family size	3.02	3.18	3.21
Single Parent Households with children under 18	22%	14%	12%
Households with children under 18 and Grandparents as householder	8.7%	5.8%	8.0%
Households with children under 18 receiving food stamps	3.7%	6.6%	5.6%
Households living in “crowded housing” with children under 18 <sup>1</sup>	2%	2.6%	3.3%
Households with at least 1 housing problem (lack of plumbing, crowding)	23%	-	-
<b>Annual cost of childcare as a percentage of median income</b>			
2020	9.4%	16.2%	13%
2019	9.4%	17%	10%
Percentage of children under 5 with working parents	55%	-	59.8%
<i>Source:</i> the U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey			
<sup>1</sup> The U.S. Census Bureau defines crowded housing as a housing unit with more than one person per room.			

## HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

In Payne County, slightly less women receive prenatal care in their first trimester of pregnancy than at the state or national levels. Comparatively, Payne County also has a lower infant mortality rate and lower rate of babies born with a low birthweight. While more children in Payne County receive Individuals with Disabilities Education Part C services, significantly less parents complete developmental screenings for their children and less children have moderate to severe developmental delays

Since 2019, the number of children referred to DHS with substantiated abuse appears to decrease. However, it is important to note that the COVID-19 Pandemic likely had a significant impact on the number of referrals made, therefore may be a factor in why the numbers have decreased.

**Table 3: Health and Well-Being of Payne County, Oklahoma, and the United States**

Health and Well-Being	Payne County	Oklahoma	US
Percentage of pregnant women having received prenatal care received during 1 <sup>st</sup> trimester	71.5%	72.5%	77.1%
Infant mortality rate	4.5/1000	7.95/1000	5.6/1000
Premature birth	11.7%	13.9%	10.1%
Low Birthweight Overall	7%	8%	8%
White	7%	8%	7%
Black	12%	14%	14%
Hispanic	7%	7%	-
Asian	5%	8%	9%
American Indian	7%	7%	8%
Percentage of infants ever breastfed	91%	77.7%	83.9%
Percentage of infants breastfed at 6 months		53.6%	56.7%
Percentage children with childhood immunizations	92.8%	71%	75.4%
Percentage children (0-35 months of age) who received parent completed developmental screening	0.72% (2020)	-	30.4% (2016)
Percentage children (0-35 months of age) with moderate to severe developmental delay	2.58%	-	16.6%
Percentage children (0-35 months of age) receiving Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Part C Services <sup>1</sup>	4.61%	1.53%	3.7%
Percentage of children enrolled in Early Education Program (Pre-K)	75.9%	75%	69%
Number of children with substantiated abuse referral <sup>2</sup>			-
2021	75	-	-
2020	105	-	-
2019	121	-	-
Children living in homes with domestic violence indicated			
2021	67	-	-
2020	67	-	-
2019	52	-	-
Number of children removed from home due to abuse			
2021	34	-	-
2020	47	-	-
2019	55	-	-

Source: OKDHS, OK2Share, CountyHealthRankings, and the US Census American Community Survey

<sup>1</sup>The IDEA Part C services are early intervention services for children ages birth through 36 months. They are designed to meet a child's needs in five developmental areas, including physical development, cognitive development, communication, social or emotional development, and adaptive development.

<sup>2</sup>Substantiated abuse means that an investigation has been conducted and evidence has been found which indicates the presence of abuse.

## SERVICES AVAILABLE

Currently, the Payne County Health Department employs one Children First nurse, seven SoonerStart employees (including speech pathologists, physical therapists, and a child development specialist), and one WIC nutritionist.

The current Children First nurse at the health department started during the pandemic and has built a commendable caseload of 19 families and has a maximum caseload of 25 families.

The SoonerStart team in Payne County currently serves over 100 clients, with additional referrals coming in every day. SoonerStart, or Early Intervention, is designed to meet the needs of families with infants or toddlers with developmental disabilities. In order to be eligible for SoonerStart services, the infant or toddler must display 50% delay in one or a 25% delay in two categories. There are no income requirements for SoonerStart. Another program which services all community members, without the requirement of a developmental delay, is Child Guidance.

The Child Guidance Program has three professional components designed to interface and provide a continuum of services to build healthy family relationships and enhance child development. These include Behavioral Health Services, Childhood Development and Parent Education Services, and Speech Language Services. Child Guidance serves children up to 13 years old and charges fees on a sliding scale, based on income. Families are not denied services due to an inability to pay.

The health department has one nutritionist who provides WIC (Women, Children, and Infants Program) services to Payne County area. Throughout the pandemic, the WIC nutritionist and clinical staff have been able to maintain the pre-pandemic caseload.



## SURVEY RESULTS

Individuals were invited to take an online survey about their experiences using services in Payne County, OK. A virtual postcard and email invites were spread through partner organizations. Samples of these invites are included in Appendix C.

In partnership with Resilient Payne County, a research team at Oklahoma State University created an online survey of questions. A list of the questions can be seen in Appendix A. These questions asked about demographics, what services they have used in Payne County, their satisfaction with the services, and reasons for not using them.

Data has been analyzed to answer the following:

- What services are used, and at what rate?
- What is the level of satisfaction with services?
- What barriers exist that prevent individuals from accessing services?

## DESCRIPTION OF THE SAMPLE

A total of 219 people completed the survey. A link was used to access the survey for 160 people, while a QR code was used to access the survey by 59 individuals.

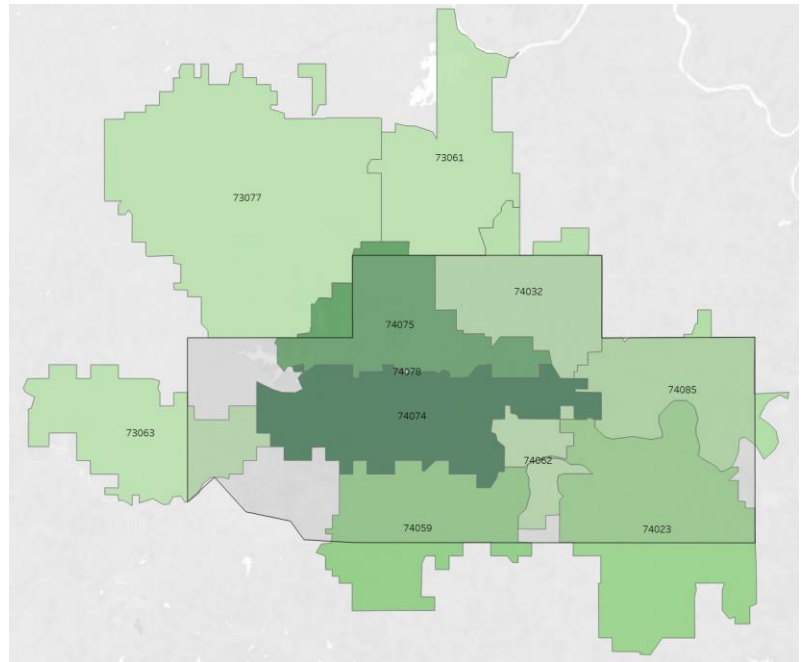
Below the sample is described by location, age, race, gender, educational attainment, income, and relationship status.

LOCATION

The respondents came from Payne County, with 68.5% of the sample coming from Stillwater city limits. Figure 2 shows a map of respondents based on the number of respondents per zip code. Payne County is outlined in the map.

In Table 4, the number of respondents per zip code are provided. Stillwater zip codes are highlighted in orange. Five zip codes reported were not located in Payne County. Two were adjacent to Payne County, highlighted in purple. Three responses were located outside of a short drive from Payne County. These are highlighted in green. The zip codes located beyond the immediate area could be due to inaccurate responses, having multiple residences, or people who use Payne County services (such as those who work in Payne County).

Figure 2: Respondents by Zip Code



Outline of Payne County with zip codes shaded darker for higher amount of respondents  
74006, 74066, and 73162 not shown

Table 4: Respondents by Zip Code

Zip Code	#	%
73061	1	0.46
73063	1	0.46
73077	1	0.46
73162	1	0.46
74006	1	0.46
74023	16	7.31
74032	3	1.37
74059	22	10.05
74062	1	0.46
74066	1	0.46
74074	90	41.1
74075	57	26.03
74078	3	1.37
74085	5	2.28
75074	1	0.46

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## AGE

Table 5 shows the age of respondents that completed the survey. The sample was relatively young, with 70% of the respondents falling within 20 to 35, a common age to have young children. Only 3% were over 45.

Table 5: Age of Respondents

Age	#	%
20 -35	144	70.24
36 – 45	54	26.34
45 +	7	3.41

Table 6 shows the age of the children for each respondent. Each respondent could choose multiple categories. As such, non responses likely contributed to a less than 100% response for having children Birth – Age 3, a requirement of the survey. Overall, the children of respondents were relatively young with 28% being in preschool range (4 to 5), and 28% being between Age 6 and Age 11, while only 12% of the children were teenagers.

Table 6: Age of Respondents' Children

Age	#	%
Birth to Age 3	190	86.76
Age 4 to Age 5	62	28.31
Age 6 to Age 11	61	27.85
Age 12 to Age 18	26	11.87

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## RACE & GENDER

The sample collected was not extremely diverse by gender or race but had multiple racial groups represented.

Table 7: Respondent Gender & Racial Makeup

Demographic	#	%
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	19	8.69%
Female	185	84.47%
Non Binary / Third Gender	1	0.46%
Prefer not to say	1	0.46%
<b>Race</b>		
White	177	80.82%
Black	6	2.74%
American Indian	18	9.78%
Asian	10	4.57%
Hispanic/Latinx	10	4.57%

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## OTHER DEMOGRAPHICS

Other notable characteristics include relationship status, education, and income. Table 8 highlights these characteristics. The sample primarily consisted of two-parent households; 77% of the sample was married or cohabitating, and 16% was single, divorced, or separated. The sample was relatively well educated, with 32% of the sample having a Master's Degree or Doctorate compared to 26% with no college degree. Similarly, 36% of the sample had incomes of more than \$75,000 compared to 19% of the sample with incomes less than \$25,000.

**Table 8: Relationship Status, Education, and Marital Status of Respondents**

Demographic	#	%
<b>Relationship Status</b>		
Married	157	71.69%
Single	27	12.33%
Divorced/Separated	9	4.11%
Cohabitating	12	5.48%
<b>Education</b>		
High School Diploma or GED	26	11.87%
Some College (no degree)	31	14.16%
College (Associates or Bachelor's)	65	29.68%
College (Master's or Doctorate)	72	32.88%
Other	2	0.91%
Vocational Training	7	3.20%
<b>Income</b>		
\$0 - \$25,000	41	18.72%
\$25,001 - \$50,000	45	20.55%
\$50,001 - \$75,000	38	17.35%
Above \$75,000	79	36.07%

## ACCESSING SERVICES

Table 9 breaks down the number of respondents who used each of the services asked about in the survey. Of services that respondents accessed, health care was the most utilized. Other services that most people accessed were emotional support and childcare, such as daycare or in-home care. A small number (21%) of respondents reported receiving parenting support.

Table 9: Types of Services Used

Support/Services Received	#	%
Health Care	173	79.00%
Emotional (friends or professionals)	136	62.10%
Childcare (daycare or in-home)	111	50.68%
Childcare Support (assistance)	98	44.75%
Preschool	81	36.99%
Nutrition Assistance	77	35.16%
Counseling/Professional Services	71	32.41%
Financial Support	68	31.05%
Parenting Support (classes, respite, etc.)	47	21.46%

## SATISFACTION

Respondents were asked how satisfied they were with the services that they received. The results of these questions are in Table 10. Respondents were asked, "Did [service] in Payne County meet your needs?" with the following options: 1. Yes Completely; 2. Sometimes; 3. No, not at all; Did not Use. Overall, respondents were satisfied with Payne County Services. The mean of satisfaction was 1.37 (SD = .41), suggesting that, on average, people were between sometimes and completely satisfied with the services they received and overall more completely satisfied than sometimes satisfied.

Table 10: Satisfaction of Services

	Yes, completely		Sometimes		No, not at all		Total
	#	%	#	%	#	%	
Counseling or Professional Support	46	64.79%	20	28.17%	5	7.04%	71
Financial Support Services	40	58.82%	19	27.94%	9	13.24%	68
Emotional Support (friend, pastor, family)	89	65.44%	40	29.41%	7	5.15%	136
Health Services	130	75.14%	40	23.12%	3	1.73%	173
Child Care Support	59	60.20%	27	27.55%	12	12.24%	98
Child Care Services	72	64.86%	34	30.63%	5	4.5%	111
Preschool Services	65	80.25%	12	14.81%	4	4.94%	81
Nutritional Support Services	58	75.32%	18	23.38%	1	1.30%	77
Parenting Support	21	44.68%	16	34.04%	10	21.28%	47

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## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT SATISFACTION OF SERVICES

People were most satisfied with health services (75.14% completely satisfied). Specifically, only 1.73% of respondents were not at all satisfied with the health care received. Additionally, it was the most utilized service by respondents, followed by emotional support services. People were least satisfied with parenting support services – 21.28% of respondents indicated being not at all satisfied with these services. Other services people were less satisfied with include financial support services and child care support services.

For each type of service asked about, respondents were asked to provide additional information about why they had good or poor experiences with this service. The responses to these questions are being thematized in Part II of this report.

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## REASONS FOR NOT ACCESSING SUPPORT SERVICES

If a respondent indicated that they did not use a particular service, they were given the option to explain their reasons for not using it. Predetermined choices included: lack of availability, lack of transportation, costing too much, lack of insurance, or not being eligible for the service. Respondents could also select “other” and indicate their reason.

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## HEALTH CARE

Health care services were the most popular service utilized. Table 11 explores the reasons for not using health care services. Of the 46 respondents who did not use any health care services, many reported a lack of available health care services that met their needs (19.6%). Further, some indicated that they were not eligible for those services (17.4%). Lack of transportation was only a limitation for three respondents of the study.

Table 11: Reasons for Not Using Health Care Services

Reason for not using (out of 46)	#	%
Lack of availability	9	19.6%
Lack of transportation	3	6.52%
Cost too much or lack of insurance	5	10.9%
Not eligible for services	8	17.4%
Other	17	40.0%

Most of those who responded “other” still used health care services, just not in Payne County due to the following reasons:

- Having already established providers
- The poor reputation of Payne County providers
- Needing specialty care
- Soonercare limitations for services such as dentistry

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## CHILD CARE SERVICES

Child care, described as licensed services, was not accessed by 111 respondents (the third most popular service utilized). Of those individuals, services costing too much was the most significant issue, with 16% stating that as a limitation. The cost was followed by not being eligible for services (12%) and a lack of availability (11%). This is shown in Table 12.

Table 12: Reasons for Not Using Child Care Services

Reason for not using (out of 111)	#	%
Lack of availability	12	10.8%
Lack of transportation	2	1.8%
Cost too much or lack of insurance	18	16.2%
Not eligible for services	13	11.7%
Other	28	25.2%

The main other reason cited as the reason for not accessing child care support services was being a stay-at-home mother, working from home, or being unemployed.

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## CHILD CARE SUPPORT SERVICES

The fourth most popular service received was child care support, described as family support or other services such as head start, not accessed by 121 individuals. Reasons for why child care support services were not used is highlighted in Table 13. A quarter of respondents who did not use these services indicated they were not eligible. Additionally, 12% of respondents said it costs too much to access. Only one person who did not receive child care support cited transportation as a major issue.

Table 13: Reasons for Not Using Child Care Support Services

Reason for not using (out of 121)	#	%
Lack of availability	9	7.4%
Lack of transportation	1	0.8%
Cost too much or lack of insurance	15	12.4%
Not eligible for services	30	24.7%
Other	27	22.3%

Those who responded with other reasons often stated that these services were not needed due to having adequate child care or staying at home.

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## PRESCHOOL

The next popular service was preschool services. Reasons for not using preschool are highlighted in Table 14. One hundred thirty-eight individuals did not access preschool. However, many of those were due to not having children in the correct age group, reported in both “not eligible for services” and “other” responses. No respondents indicated that lack of transportation was a deciding factor.

Table 14: Reasons for Not Using Preschool Services

Reason for not using (out of 138)	#	%
Lack of availability	10	7.2%
Lack of transportation	0	0.0%
Cost too much or lack of insurance	4	2.9%
Not eligible for services	28	20.3%
Other	33	24.9%

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## NUTRITION SUPPORT

Nutrition support was accessed by 35% of the respondents, with 142 people not using any nutritional support services. Reasons are highlighted in Table 15. A large amount of those respondents said they were not eligible for services (31.7%). In contrast, no respondents said that nutrition support services were too expensive or not covered by insurance.

Table 15: Reasons for Not Using Nutrition Support Services

Reason for not using (out of 142)	#	%
Lack of availability	2	1.4%
Lack of transportation	2	1.4%
Cost too much or lack of insurance	0	0.0%
Not eligible for services	45	31.7%
Other	15	10.6%

Those who responded with other reasons for not using nutrition support services indicated they did not need these services or had not explored/were unaware of such services.



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## PARENTING SUPPORT

Parenting support services were the least used, with only 21% of the respondents indicating they have accessed parenting supports. Meanwhile, 172 respondents stated they did not access parenting support services. Reasons for not using parenting supports are highlighted in Table 16. Not being eligible for services explained 13% of those who did not use services. A majority of individuals had other reasons noted below.

Table 16: Reasons for Not Using Parenting Support Services

Reason for not using (out of 172)	#	%
Lack of availability	10	5.8%
Lack of transportation	2	1.2%
Cost too much or lack of insurance	4	2.3%
Not eligible for services	23	13.4%
Other	44	25.6%

Many respondents indicated that they were unfamiliar with parenting support services, while others said that the services were not needed.

## SEEKING ADVICE

Respondents were asked to provide where they turn to for advice regarding health care decisions and parenting. Predefined choices of family, primary care doctor, pediatrician, online resources, and friends were provided. Respondents could additionally add other sources that they sought.

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## HEALTH CARE ADVICE

Respondents were asked where they seek out advice about health care decisions. These sources are shown in Table 17. The majority of respondents indicated they speak to their primary care doctor or pediatrician (70.3%). This was followed by family (42%), online resources (33%), and friends (30%).

Table 17: Sources of Health Care Advice

Sources	#	%
Family	92	42.0%
Primary Care Doctor/Pediatrician	154	70.3%
Online Resources	72	32.9%
Friends	66	30.1%
Other	16	7.3%

Other reasons provided included other professional services such as childcare providers, chiropractors, or other specialists.

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## PARENTING ADVICE

Respondents were also asked where they seek out parenting advice. The reasons are shown in Table 18. More than half of respondents indicated turning to family for parenting advice (55.7%). Less than half relied on friends (48%) and online resources (40%). The least used source for parenting advice was doctors (40%).

Table 18: Sources of Parenting Advice

Sources	#	%
Family	112	55.7%
Primary Care Doctor/Pediatrician	87	39.7%
Online Resources	88	40.2%
Friends	104	47.5%
Other	31	14.2%

Other resources included books, OSU, and professionals such as psychologists, childcare providers, or healthy steps.

## THEMES OF SURVEY RESULTS

Three major themes arose from the survey results. These included the location of Payne County and the general lack of challenges coming from transportation, the strengths of the healthcare system, and ways to improve awareness of services.

### TRANSPORTATION & GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION OF PAYNE COUNTY

Overall, those who completed the survey did not identify transportation as a significant barrier to accessing services. Lack of transportation was only identified ten times as a barrier to using a service. It was not recognized as a barrier for preschool.

Five respondents came from zip codes surrounding Payne County and reported that they use services within the county. Overall, the central location of Stillwater in the county serves as a benefit to the surrounding areas. The communities in neighboring counties might identify with Stillwater and drive to use services in town due to employment or convenience.

A limited number of participants identified health care challenges in Payne County. Challenges included specialty care lacking in the county. Further challenges of using Soonercare for dentistry services within Payne County were identified. Overall, people were pleased with the health care in the county but had difficulties in fulfilling their fundamental health care needs.

### BUILDING ON THE STRENGTHS OF HEALTH CARE

Health care was a significantly used service by the respondents of this survey. Additionally, 75% of the people who used healthcare services were completely satisfied with the service. Only 2% of the people who used health care in Payne County were not at all satisfied. These results show the strengths of the healthcare system.

Individuals' challenges with health care were centered around having to drive to Tulsa or Oklahoma City to receive the required services, including specialty services and pediatric dentistry covered by Soonercare. Building on the strengths of the healthcare system to expand these specialty services would meet a need.

### ONLINE RESOURCES AND AWARENESS

When asked where people go for advice when making health care or parenting decisions, 33% said they use online sources for health care advice, and 40% said they use online sources for parenting advice. This should be noted when working to disseminate information to the general public.

Parenting support services and nutrition services were identified as not being used due to a lack of awareness about these services. Using online sources could help facilitate understanding of these services. However, a large majority (70%) trusted primary care doctors in making health care advice. Doctors were not identified as often (40%) for parenting advice but were still utilized. Doctors should be aware of the trusted role they play in the decision-making process for parents of young children. Encouraging doctors to share parenting resources along with health care resources would improve awareness of these services.

## QUALITATIVE DATA: INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS

### STUDY PROCEDURES

A purposive sampling method was used with families living in Payne County (N=20). Family participants included caregivers that had experience accessing services within Payne County. Interviews were conducted in August and September 2021.

Participants were contacted by phone to be recruited into individual interviews. Interviews were conducted by phone at the family's convenience and lasted approximately 45 minutes to one hour. All individual interviews were transcribed and cross-checked by qualitative team members to ensure accuracy. During transcription, all identifying information that could be linked to informants was removed.

Caregivers received a \$50 Wal-Mart gift card to compensate them for their time in participating in the phone interview. The study including evaluation methods were approved by the University Institutional Review Board (IRB).

### INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW GUIDE DEVELOPMENT

Semi-structured individual interview guides were developed by the lead qualitative researcher and reviewed by the broader research team. The purpose of the semi-structured guide was to assess caregivers' perceptions of services they received in Payne County, how services met their needs, and any additional services needed. The interview guide also focused on understanding accessibility of services and barriers families face in getting services for themselves and their family. Lastly, the interview guide briefly asked caregivers about some of their experiences during COVID-19. The interview guide is included in Appendix B.

### QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

Qualitative data analysis of the transcriptions was conducted using NVivo software. A template approach was used to identify broad themes. More specific themes were also identified and were coded as sub-nodes within the broader categories with a codebook developed collaboratively by two trained qualitative researchers. Training in developing the coding scheme and codebook took approximately two days. Upon completion of the codebook, two qualitative researchers coded every transcription separately using the created templates and discussed any discrepancies. Percentages were then calculated for every specific and broad theme within the transcription. First, the percentage was found for participants who made at least one comment about each particular theme. This allowed researchers to identify what proportion of participants spoke about a particular subject. Second, the percentage of total comments for each theme was calculated. This gave an indication of the emphasis that each theme received during the interviews. Themes are described in more detail below.

## SERVICES IN PAYNE COUNTY

Caregivers were asked about services they received in Payne County with caregivers explaining services related to health care (100% of caregivers), child development services (94% of caregivers), daycare/childcare (94% of caregivers), preschool (94% of caregivers), parenting support (100% of caregivers), and food resources (89% of caregivers).

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## HEALTHCARE

Related to healthcare, the most common services utilized were in the hospital setting and included emergency room services, bloodwork, and specific services at Stillwater Medical Center including labor/delivery, prenatal care, and classes related to childbirth/parenting and breastfeeding. Caregivers also explained that they utilize medical services through SoonerCare (33% of caregivers) including child health care, prenatal care, and SoonerRide. Other services included utilizing a pediatrician (44% of caregivers) and pediatric clinics (39% of caregivers). Caregivers also shared that they utilize Indian Health Services (22% of caregivers), Gynecology (17% of caregivers), Urgent Care (17% of caregivers), Health Department (11% of caregivers), Physical Therapy (6% of caregivers), and services in Oklahoma City (6% of caregivers).

Caregivers also discussed how healthcare services met their needs with families explaining that pediatricians met their needs through answering questions, providing needed referrals, conducting well-child checkups, and being well connected to other providers/services. Thinking about child health care more broadly, families expressed that there are good options for health care for children with services being reliable and supporting families in infant check-ups and vaccinations. Related to SoonerCare, families explained that a variety of services are provided that are local, no cost, covers the entire family, and enrollment happens in the hospital when baby is born. Caregivers also discussed how Indian Health Services met their needs through being affordable and providing a wide array of health services.

Some families also discussed that health services did not meet their needs with families explaining they experienced long wait times and were referred elsewhere and experienced a lengthy referral process.

In terms of how healthcare services can be improved, caregivers discussed the need for affordable and accessible services. Related to affordability, caregivers discussed emergency services being costly and issues related to insurance. In relation to accessibility, caregivers discussed the need for shorter waitlists for services, services closer to home, increased options for specialty services, appointments scheduled more quickly and same day appointments for emergency services, and appointment options on the weekend.

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## CHILD DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

Families also discussed child development services they have accessed (94% of caregivers). Specifically, they discussed using the Healthy Steps program and services through the Health Department. These services included hearing screenings, SoonerStart, and well-child checkups. Other child development services include specialist services focused on child development, behavioral therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy, and speech therapy. Families also explained utilizing developmental daycares, assessment services, and library services focused on child development.

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## DAYCARE/CHILDCARE

In terms of childcare/daycare programs, 100% of caregivers reported using daycare and other childcare services. Specific daycare programs include services at the YMCA, faith-based locations, and in-home daycare. It is also important to note that many families explained not utilizing formal childcare/daycare due to costs, being immunocompromised, child having behavioral issues, and not trusting teachers.

Families also discussed how daycare/childcare services have met their needs with caregivers reporting services promote child safety, well-being, and socialization. It was also reported that services meet the needs of families through being affordable and being in close proximity to families. Lastly, it was explained that services met family's needs through having a good teacher-child ratio, good staff, and making families feel comfortable.

In terms of how childcare/daycare programs could be improved, it was explained that additional options are needed such as part-time care, additional facilities in rural areas, increased availability/shorter waitlists, and increased hours such as earlier start times, extended closing time, and summer hours. In terms of teaching quality, families explained the need for smaller class sizes and more teachers. The need for more affordable services and a focus on education was also described.

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## PRESCHOOL

In terms of preschool, 94% of caregivers discussed these services. Families explained utilizing public, faith-based, and private preschools. Families also discussed Head Start and homeschool preschool options. In thinking about how preschool has met family's needs, caregivers explained how preschool can support child social-emotional learning, is developmentally appropriate, flexible, and enjoyable.

In terms of how preschool services could be improved, families explained the need for more affordable options, having good schools in all districts, improved nutrition, and increased all day program options. For Head Start, families explained the need for closer proximity, more teachers, and smaller class sizes. One caregiver explained it might be helpful to create an agency that could support linking families to preschool programs that best fit the child/family.

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## PARENTING SUPPORT

Caregivers also discussed parenting supports (100% of caregivers). Although most caregivers indicated no parenting supports were utilized (50% of caregivers), supports that were used include asking family, friends, and professionals for parenting support. Other supports include engaging with professionals and finding online support. Families also discussed going to classes, using respite care, tribal services, and other parenting programs such as Healthy Steps, New Beginnings, and Comprehensive Home-Based Services (CHBS).

When discussing how parenting services could be improved families explained that general first-time parenting information is needed and an increase in available parenting services. It is important to note that when parents were asked about available parenting services, families often explained they were not aware of services or described services focused on prenatal and birth classes.

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## FOOD RESOURCES

Caregivers also discussed nutritional resources for families (89% of caregivers). Families explained accessing Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), free school lunches, food stamps, and local food services (i.e., Our Daily Bread). In terms of how nutritional supports could be improved, families explained the need for transportation/delivery, extended hours, healthier foods, and flexible qualifying requirements.

## SERVICES YOU WISH YOU HAD THAT WERE NOT AVAILABLE

Families were asked about services they wish they had that were not available, with several key areas discussed including health related supports (58% of caregivers), parenting support (50% of caregivers), and resources (33% of caregivers). With regard to health-related supports caregivers explained the need for adult dental health, counseling, increased local medical options, increased specialty care, and increased access to Sooner Care. For parenting support, caregivers reported the need for childcare (evening and weekends), increased events for children, mom groups, and parenting classes. Related to parenting classes, caregivers discussed the need for information on financial literacy and support in understanding how to take care of children. Resources that caregivers discussed needing were related to food (i.e., food assistance, food stamps), infancy (i.e., diapers), and increased services for the middle class. In terms of finding support for families, some caregivers reported going online, using food banks, using literacy programs (i.e., online, preschool, little free libraries), using family assistance, salvation army, and finding programs through word of mouth.

## DIFFICULTIES IN ACCESSING SERVICES AND SUPPORTS

Caregivers also discussed difficulties in accessing services with families explaining problems in availability of services (50% of caregivers). This included problems with lengthy waitlists, lack of telehealth, and lack of available specialty services or difficulties getting referrals for specialty services. Another issue caregivers shared were related to financial difficulties (33% of caregivers) including lack of insurance and not having finances for specialty services and medications. In terms of logistical barriers (38% of caregivers) families discussed transportation issues including lack of transportation (i.e., no car or license), proximity of services, and cost of driving). It was also explained that logistical issues including not having time to access services and difficulties with work schedules. In relation to childcare (38% of caregivers) families explained not having access to babysitters and childcare issues related to COVID. COVID related issues included childcare facility closures and lack of childcare during prenatal visits, when school is closed, and no childcare support during virtual school. Other barriers reported include families not being aware of services/programs (19% of caregivers) and a broader difficulty in families accessing programs (13% of caregivers).

## APPENDIX A: ONLINE SURVEY

What is your age range?

20 – 35

36 – 45

Over 45

What is your gender?

Male

Female

Non-binary / third gender

Prefer not to say

What is your race?

*Select all that apply*

White/Caucasian

Asian

Black/African American

Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander

American Indian

Hispanic/Latino

What is your home Zip Code?

What is your current relationship status?

Married

Single

Divorced/Separated

Widowed

Cohabiting with partner

What is the highest level of education that you have achieved?



High school diploma or GED

Some college (no degree)

Vocational Training (e.g. computers, mechanics, beauty)

College (Associates or Bachelor's Degree)

College (Master's Doctorate)

Other \_\_\_\_\_

How many children live in your home?

What are the age ranges of all children in your home under the age of 18?

*Select all that apply*

Birth to Age 3

4 – 5 yrs

6 – 11 yrs

12 – 18 yrs

What is your annual household income (including salaries, child support, alimony, SSI, TANF, from any source)?

\$0 - \$25,000

\$25,001 - \$50,000

\$50,001 - \$75,000

Above \$75,000

What is the primary language spoken in your home?

English

Spanish

Other \_\_\_\_\_

Thinking about times when you felt stressed, as a parent, did you get the support needed? To clarify your choice, please comment under each service. Support may include any services that are free or that you might have paid for.

Counseling or Professional Support: Did counseling or professional support services in Payne County meet your needs? (Mental health provider, counseling through your place of worship, crisis hotline, Health Department)

Yes, completely

Sometimes

No, not at all

Did not use any counseling or professional support services

Please tell us about your experiences with counseling or professional support services in Payne County. If there is a service that did not meet your needs, or one that exceeded your expectations, please tell us about it, and how it did or did not meet your needs.

Financial Support: Did financial support services in Payne County meet your needs? (Unemployment, debt counseling, housing assistance, TANF, support through your place of worship)

Yes, completely

Sometimes

No, not at all

Did not use any financial support services

Please tell us about your experiences with Financial Support Services in Payne County. If there is a service that did not meet your needs, or one that exceeded your expectations, please tell us about it, and how it did or did not meet your needs.

Emotional Support: Did you receive emotional support from a friend, pastor, family member, or community professional when you need it?

Yes, completely

Sometimes

No, not at all

Did not use/need Emotional Support

Please tell us about your emotional support services in Payne County. If there is a service that did not meet your needs, or one that exceeded your expectations, please tell us about it, and how it did or did not meet your needs.

Thinking about community services you used when your child was between 0 to 3 years of age, how well were your needs met for each of the following services or programs? To clarify your choice, please comment under each service. Community services may include any services that are free or that you might have paid for.

Health: Did health services in Payne County meet your needs? (Pediatrician, Health Department, Speciality Clinic, Hospital, Dentist)

Yes, completely

Sometimes

No, not at all

Did not use any health services

Please tell us about your experiences with health services in Payne County. If there is a service that did not meet your needs, or one that exceeded your expectations, please tell us about it, and how it did or did not meet your needs.

Lack of availability

Lack of transportation

Cost too much or lack of insurance

Other \_\_\_\_\_

Child Care Support: Did childcare support services in Payne County meet your needs? (Friends/family assisting in caring for your child when needed; Child Care Subsidy; Head Start; etc.)

Yes, completely

Sometimes

No, not at all

Did not use any Child Care support services

Please tell us about your experiences with child care support services in Payne County. If there is a service that did not meet your needs, or one that exceeded your expectations, please tell us about it, and how it did or did not meet your needs.

Child Care: Did child care services in Payne County meet your needs? (Licensed childcare centers, or in-home providers)

Yes, completely

Sometimes

No, not at all

Did not use any child care services

Please tell us about your experiences with child care services in Payne County. If there is a service that did not meet your needs, or one that exceeded your expectations, please tell us about it, and how it did or did not meet your needs.

If you did not use any child care services, please check all reasons that apply

Lack of availability

Lack of transportation

Cost too much

Other \_\_\_\_\_

Preschool: Did preschool services in Payne County meet your needs? (Public or Private Preschool – e.g. Head Start, Public School 4 yr. old program, Church preschool)

Yes, completely

Sometimes

No, not at all

Did not use any preschool services

Please tell us about your experiences with preschool services in Payne County. If there is a service that did not meet your needs, or one that exceeded your expectations, please tell us about it, and how it did or did not meet your needs

If you did not use preschool services, please check all reasons that apply

Lack of availability

Lack of transportation

Cost too much

Other \_\_\_\_\_

Nutrition Support: Did nutrition support services in Payne County meet your needs? (WIC, SNAP, community food pantry, example: Our Daily Bread)

Yes, completely

Sometimes

No, not at all

Did not use any nutrition support services

Please tell us about your experiences with nutritional support services in Payne Copunty. If there is a service that did not meet your needs, or one that exceeded your expectations, please tell us about it, and how it did or did not meet your needs.

If you did not use nutrition support services in Payne County, please check all the reasons that apply.

Lack of availability

Lack of transportation

Cost too much/Not covered by insurance

Other \_\_\_\_\_

Parenting Support: Did parenting support services in Payne County meet your needs? (parenting support may include home visiting, parenting classes, respite care, babysitting services or mothers' day out programs, etc.)

Yes, completely

Sometimes

No, not at all

Did not use any parenting support services

Please tell us about your experiences with parenting support services in Payne County. If there is a service that did not meet your needs, or one that exceeded your expectations, please tell us about it and how it did or did not meet your needs.

If you did not use parenting support services in Payne County, please select all the reasons why.

Lack of availabili8ty

Lack of transportation

Cost too much/Did not take my insurance

Other \_\_\_\_\_

Thinking about times when you have sought advice from others, please answer the following. (please check all that apply). To clarify, please comment in the space provided.

Where do you seek health care advice?

*Check all that apply*

Family

Primary Care Doctor or Pediatrician

Online Resource

Friends

Other \_\_\_\_\_

Clarify any additional information about seeking health care advice

Where do you seek parenting advice?

Family

Primary Care Doctor or Pediatrician

Online Resource

Friends

Other \_\_\_\_\_

Clarify any additional information about seeking parenting advice.

## APPENDIX B: INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. Please tell me your first name and something about your family.
2. There are a variety of services in Payne County for children and families. Tell me about any services you have received focused on your child(ren) or family.
  - a. Health Care

If no, tell me about any health care services you are aware of in your area?

If yes, how has health care services met your needs?  
How could health care services be improved?
  - b. Child Development Services

\*This may include your child having an assessment or receiving services for your child to support them developmentally. (i.e, Healthy Steps, Sooner Start, etc.)

If no, tell me about any child development services you are aware of in your area?

If yes, how has child development services met your needs?  
How could child development services be improved?
  - c. Daycare/Childcare

If no, tell me about any daycare/childcare services you are aware of in your area?

If yes, how has daycare/childcare met your needs?  
How could daycare/childcare be improved?
  - d. Preschool (i.e., Head Start, Pre-K, Private schools, etc.)

If no, tell me about any preschool services you are aware of in your area?

If yes, how has preschool met your needs?  
How could preschool be improved?
  - e. Parenting support (i.e., home-based parenting services, parenting classes, etc.)

If no, tell me about any parenting support services you are aware of in your area?

If yes, how have parenting support services met your needs?  
How could parenting support services be improved?
  - f. Food Resources (i.e., WIC, Food stamps, Our Daily Bread, school lunch pick-ups, etc.)

If no, tell me about any food resources you are aware of in your area?

If yes, how have food resources met your needs?  
How could food resources be improved?

3. Thinking back to when you have needed services for your child(ren) and family. What services do you wish you had but was not available?
  - a. Why are these services needed?
  - b. How did you find support for your family since you were not able to find a service to meet your family needs?
  
4. Sometimes families need additional support that is more focused on parents. Tell me about any services you have received focused on yourself.
  - a. Counseling/Therapy
 

If no, tell me about any counseling/therapy services you are aware of in your area?

If yes, how has counseling/therapy met your needs?  
How could counseling/therapy services be improved?
  - b. Financial Support – bill assistance (i.e., Salvation Army, Catholic Charities, etc.)
 

If no, tell me about any financial support services you are aware of in your area?

If yes, how has financial support met your needs?  
How could financial support services be improved?
  
5. Families need a lot of support when raising children. Tell me about the social supports (groups or people) you have to help you and your family.
  - Family
  - Friends
  - Church/Faith based community
  - Other

Tell me about what additional social supports you wish you had?
  
6. As a parent, when you need help where do you seek support and advice for...
  - a. Parenting
 

Who do you trust the most to give you parenting advice/support?
  - b. Health Care
 

Who do you trust the most to give you health care advice/support?
  
7. Many of the services/supports you have discussed can be difficult for families to access. Tell me about what has made it difficult for you to access these services/supports.
  - a. Transportation
    - i. Access to transportation
    - ii. Proximity of services
  - b. Childcare
  - c. Waiting lists
  - d. Lack of insurance
  - e. Other
  
8. During coronavirus many families have had increased difficulties finding and accessing the services they need. Tell me about how coronavirus has impacted you being able to access services/resources?
  - a. Probe all of the services previously discussed
  - b. What services/supports have you noticed you need more since coronavirus?
  
9. Is there anything else you would like to share today?





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Of children 0-3 Years

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# PARENTS!

Of Children 0-3 Years

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