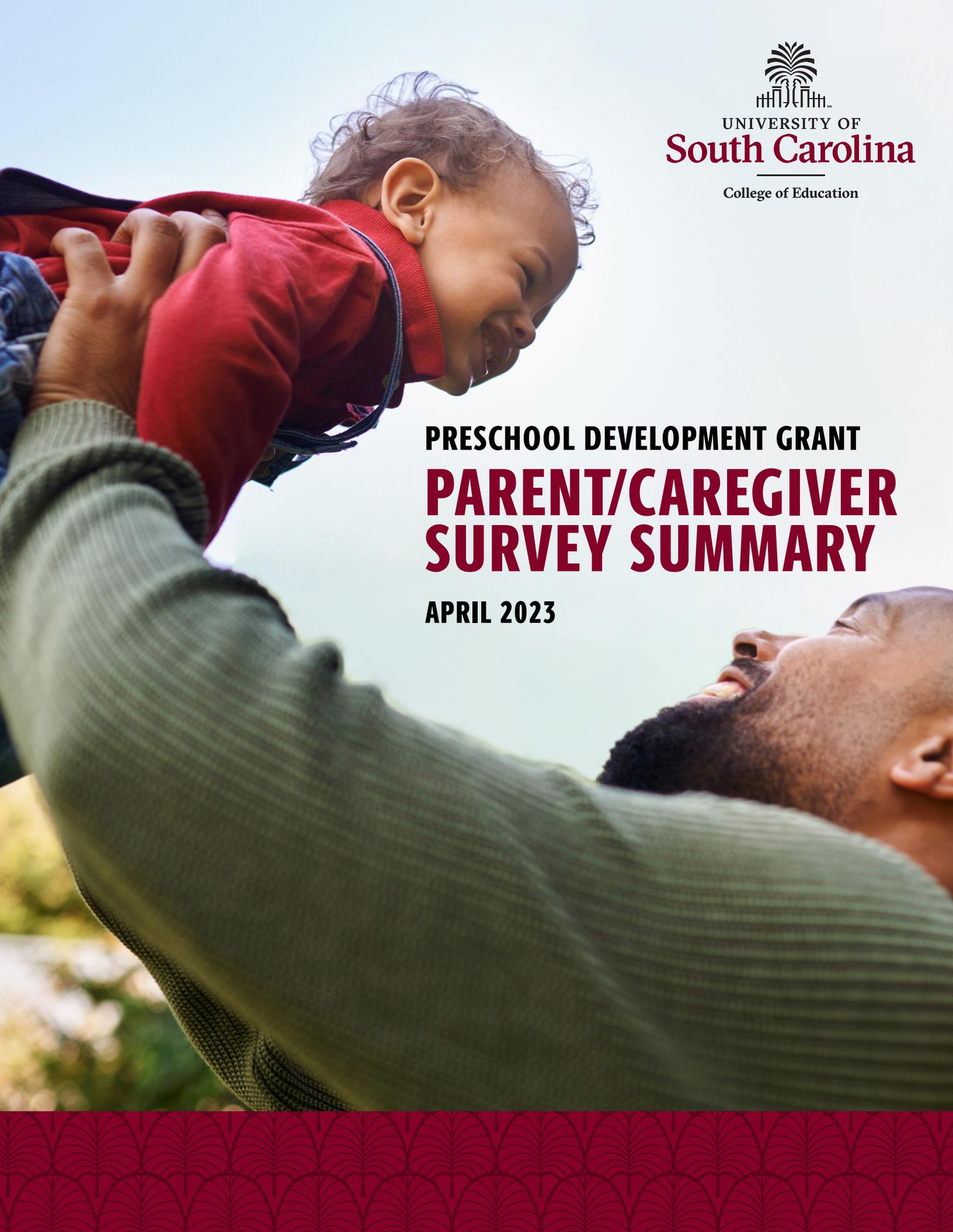




UNIVERSITY OF  
**South Carolina**

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A photograph of a man with a beard, wearing a green sweater, holding a baby in a red shirt. The man is looking up at the baby with a smile. The background is a bright, slightly blurred outdoor setting.

**PRESCHOOL DEVELOPMENT GRANT**  
**PARENT/CAREGIVER**  
**SURVEY SUMMARY**

**APRIL 2023**



# Thank you

## TO OUR CONTRIBUTORS

This work was made possible through a Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five Initiative (Grant Number 90TP0080-02-22) from the Office of Child Care, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. This grant was awarded to the South Carolina Department of Social Services in collaboration with South Carolina First Steps. We appreciate the leadership of Michele Bowers, Director of the Division of Early Care and Education at the South Carolina Department of Social Services, Georgia Mjartan, Executive Director of South Carolina First Steps, Mary Lynn Diggs, Director of the South Carolina Head Start Collaboration Office, and Laura Johns with Propulsion<sup>2</sup>. The PDG Leadership Team, including more than 20 agencies and organizations, provided invaluable insights, support, and feedback throughout the process. The South Carolina Family Voice Council, South Carolina Head Start Fatherhood Coalition, South Carolina Revenue and Fiscal Affairs Office, South Carolina Inclusion Collaborative, South Carolina Department of Education, PASOs, South Carolina licensed child care programs, First Steps partnerships across the state, ABC Quality, and many others offered guidance in effectively gaining parent/caregiver voice and connected us with parents/caregivers.

We especially thank the many South Carolina parents and caregivers who completed surveys, participated in interviews, and informed our understanding of the needs of young children and their families. This work was designed to center around parent/caregiver needs. We hope we have succeeded in representing their voices, and we strive to elevate these voices to inform early childhood policy and practice.

## PRESCHOOL DEVELOPMENT GRANT NEEDS ASSESSMENT



## PDG NEEDS ASSESSMENT COLLABORATIVE





# 2,727

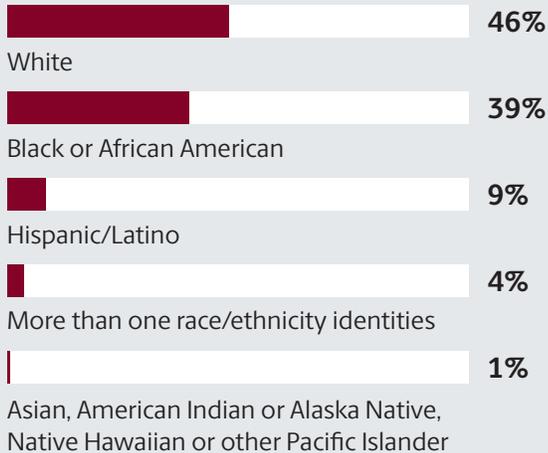
## PARTICIPANTS

# 46

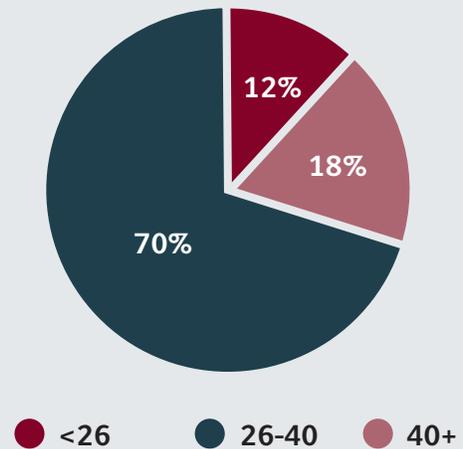


## COUNTIES

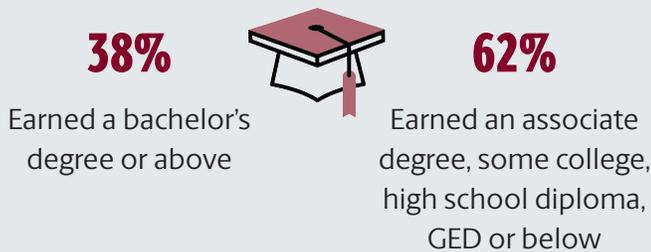
### RACE & ETHNICITY



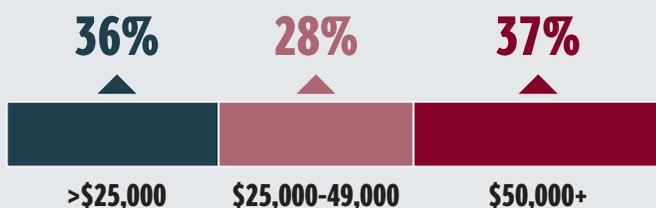
### AGE



### EDUCATION



### ANNUAL INCOME



## DEMOGRAPHICS

**A total of 2,727 participants from 46 counties in South Carolina were included in the analysis.**

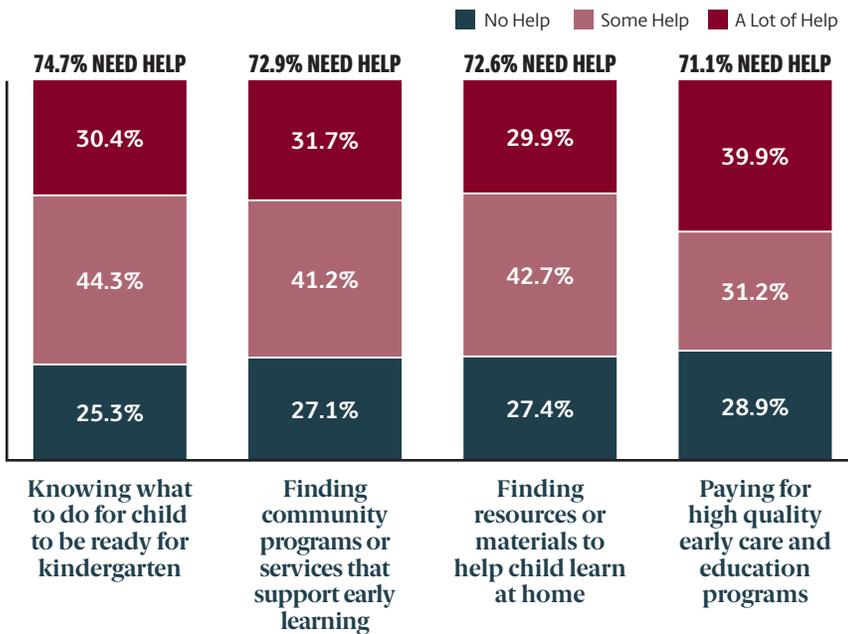
Demographic information provides data regarding research participants and is necessary to validate the individuals in this study are representative of the target population for in the survey.

**REPORT FINDING:**

# Early Learning & Development



When asked to indicate the level of help they need regarding the learning and development of their children (0-5 years old), between 56% and 75% of the parents/caregivers reported need for some or a lot of help related to learning and development. Comparatively, large percentages (70% or more) of parents/caregivers needed some or a lot of help in:

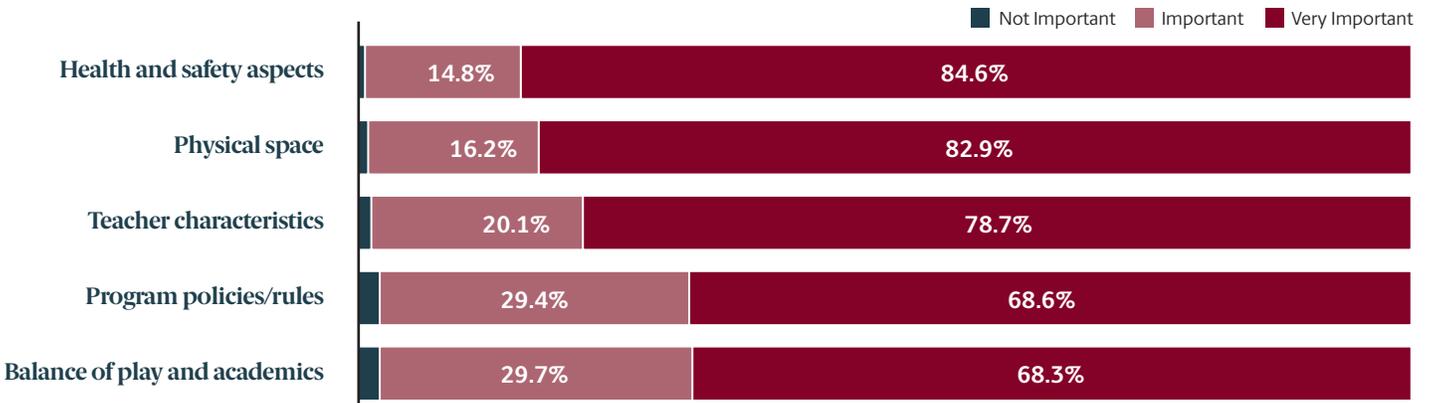


“There is a need for high quality childcare in every community, but especially in rural and underserved communities. Additionally, there is a need for increased support for new mothers/parents who have fewer resources and who may be young. It is hard enough having a new baby when you have resources.”

**— PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK**



Through the survey, it was noted that between 56% and 99% of parents/caregivers considered certain aspects important when enrolling in an early care and education program. Comparatively, large percentages (98% or more) of parents/caregivers considered the following aspects important:

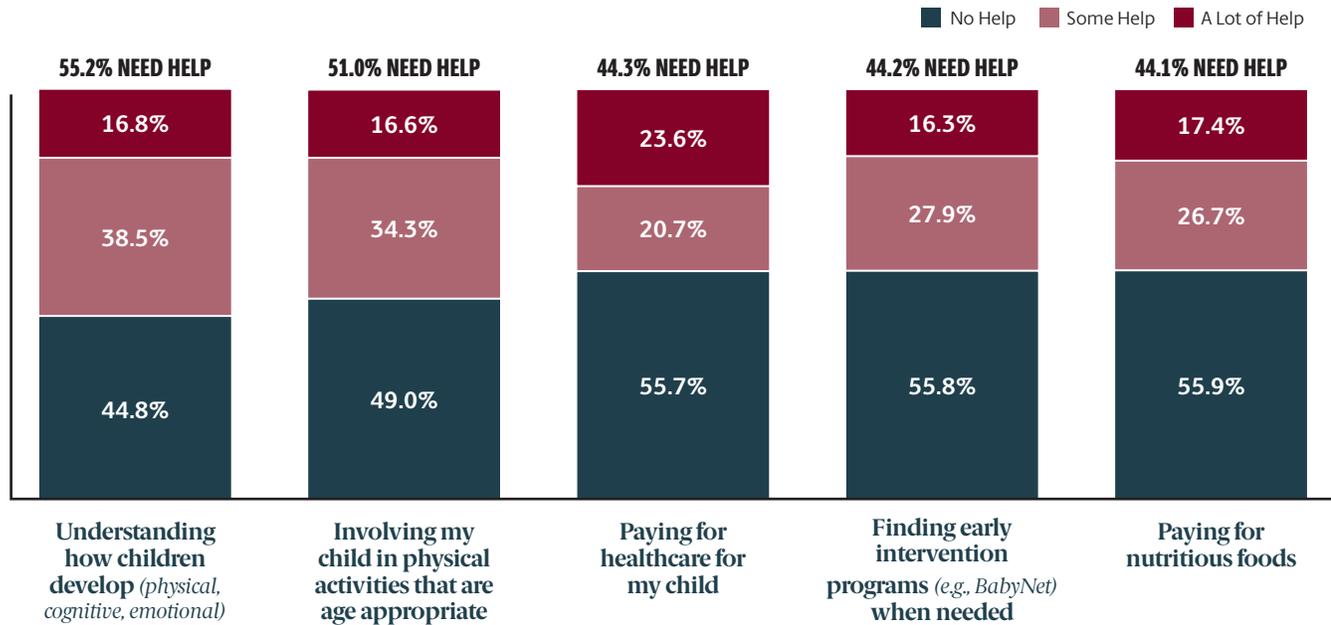


**REPORT FINDING:**

# Health & Wellbeing



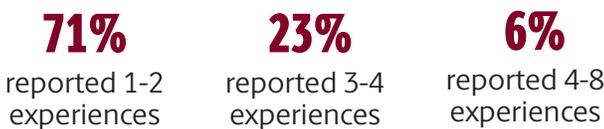
When asked to indicate the level of help they needed regarding the health and wellbeing of their children (0-5 years old), between 20% and 55% of the parents/caregivers reported need for some or a lot of help related to health and wellbeing. Comparatively, large percentages (44% or more) of parents/caregivers needed some or a lot of help in:



When asked if they had experienced adversity in the past five years, 42.7% of the parents/caregivers indicated they have had adverse experiences. Among those who reported adverse experiences, the top three categories were:



Additionally, among 735 parents/caregivers who selected at least one adverse experience:



“Child care became unstable because of COVID and I cannot work because of it. Severe depression as a result and it affects how I am as a mom. I want to give up every day. I was a teenage mom and have only known struggle.”

— PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK



**REPORT FINDING:**

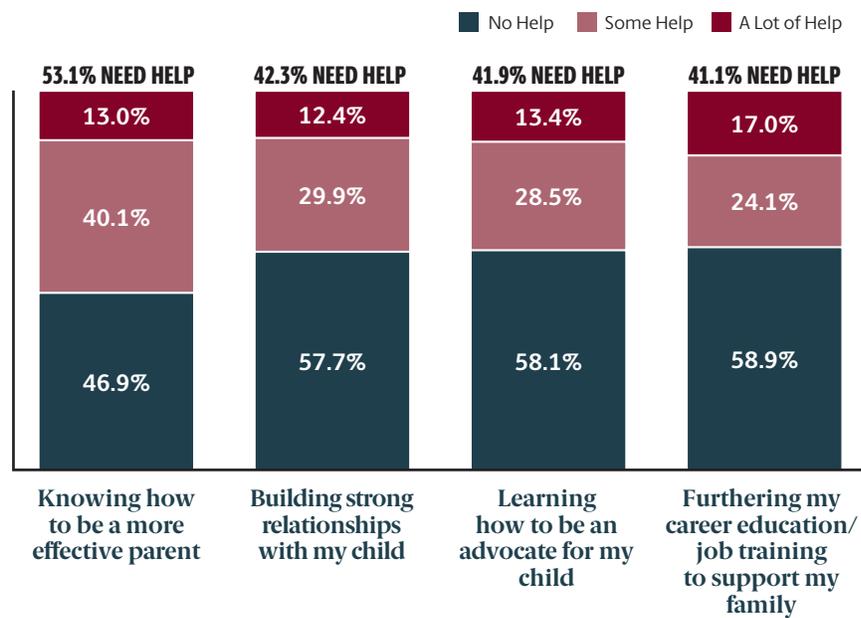
# Family Support & Community



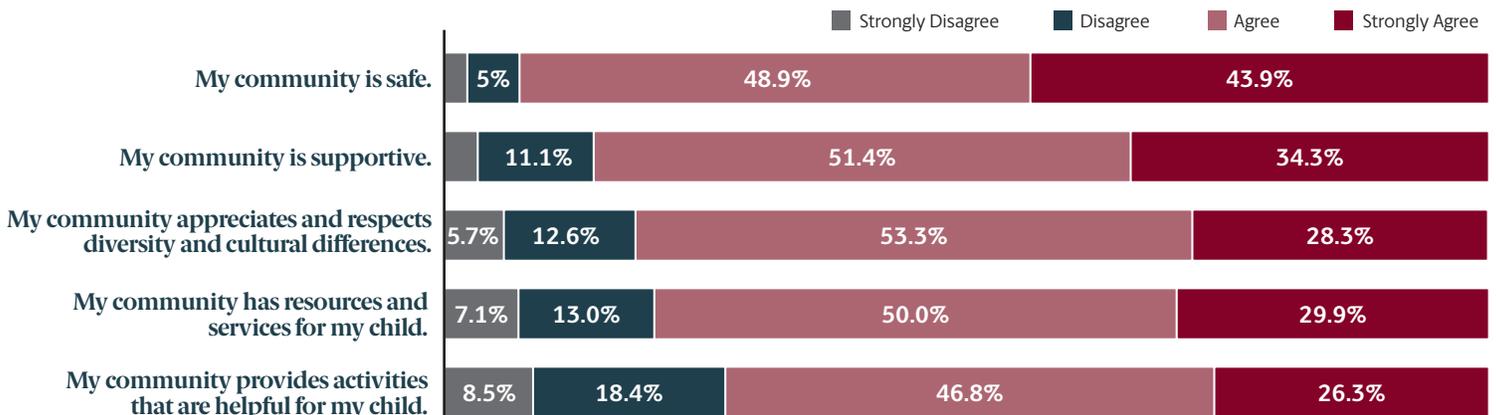
When asked to indicate the level of help that they needed to support their children (0-5 years old), between 22% and 53% of the parents/caregivers reported the need for some or a lot of help related to family support. Comparatively, large percentages of parents/caregivers (41% or more) needed some or a lot of help in:

“The community that I live in provides effective resources. The only problem is making the resources easier to get and not have to be such a long process in getting the resource needed.”

— **PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK**



When asked to indicate the agreement levels on the following statements about their community, a majority of parents/caregivers would say:



# ADDITIONAL FINDINGS

In addition to the survey, 38 interviews were conducted by telephone or in-person to understand the perceptions of parents/caregivers of young children. The interview questions were aligned with three major domains: early learning and development, health and wellbeing, and family and community.

## Early Childhood Education

For early childhood education, three themes were identified. The need to:



- ✿ Enhance child care availability and offerings.
- ✿ Provide resources to support educational development at home.
- ✿ Engage fathers in their children's education.

## Health and Wellbeing

For health and wellbeing, five themes were identified. The need to:



- ✿ Ensure access to mental and behavioral health resources.
- ✿ Promote early detection and intervention for developmental differences.
- ✿ Promote opportunities for physical activity within the community.
- ✿ Provide clarification on COVID-19 vaccines and safety measures.
- ✿ Promote necessary resources.

## Family and Community

For family and community, three themes were identified. The need to:



- ✿ Increase community activities and engagement to promote diversity and inclusion.
- ✿ Improve accessibility and affordability to community resources.

## IN CLOSING

Our team deeply values the role of family in the lives of young children so we wanted the Preschool Development Grant Needs Assessment to center parent/caregiver voices. We sought input on three interrelated aspects: early learning and development, health and wellbeing, and family and community. Through surveys and interviews conducted in 2021-2022, the findings highlight the most prominent needs of a diverse group of South Carolina families. While we used a variety of strategies to reach parents/caregivers, we realize there remain underrepresented voices in this work, and we will continue to elevate these voices as we move forward.

Our findings represent an urgent call to action for South Carolina and will be used to shape a statewide strategic plan. They should also inform others with decision making power and could bring focus to state-wide improvement efforts. Please help us ensure South Carolina children and families are well cared for and have opportunities to meet their potential. Share this report with community leaders in your area to advocate on behalf of our state's most precious asset.



# College of Education

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

820 Main Street  
Columbia, SC 29208

[sc.edu/education](http://sc.edu/education)

803-777-3828

**FOR THE FULL REPORT:**

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**FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:**

[damico@mailbox.sc.edu](mailto:damico@mailbox.sc.edu)