

Head Start, Inc Five-Year Community Assessment

2018-2022

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Head Start, Inc. service preschool age children ages three and four. Its 360 Head Start slots plus state and fee-funded additional 42 slots are concentrated in the greater Billings metropolitan area with two sites in Billings, one in Laurel and one in Lockwood (a distinct community identity in Billings).

TRENDS FOR HEAD START ELIGIBLE YOUNG CHILDREN

Continued overall trend toward concentration of income eligible children in urban areas: Billings and Yellowstone county have a substantial majority of children under five in the Head Start, Inc. service area and population trends continue to push most of the population into Billings or areas directly adjacent to it. The Huntley Project area is somewhat of an exception, with a rapidly growing population of about 122 young children who are income eligible for Head Start services. The total number of children in need there is still smaller than in Laurel, but further tracking of that area of Yellowstone county is merited. Carbon County continues with almost flat population growth, aging population, and few children. In 2016, approximately 668 children in Yellowstone County and 20 in Carbon County were three or four years old and lived in households with incomes below 100% of the federal poverty line.

Income eligible children are concentrated around Billings/Laurel. Huntley Project and southern Carbon County area have smaller concentrated pockets of need. Most children who are income eligible live in Billings, particularly in a handful of neighborhoods on the south, north and west side. Laurel is the second largest feeder area, but the number of income eligible children there is about 150, just over 10% of the 1,339 children under in poverty in Billings. Huntley Project has around 122 children that were income eligible under five in 2016. Carbon County had roughly 52 children in poverty in 2016, almost half of what it was in 2015. Red Lodge and East Carbon CCD had the most children, but the numbers remain quite small and will probably remain so without major changes in population trends and economic conditions.

A greater proportion of Hispanic/Latino and American Indian children under 5 qualify for Head Start Services than are present in the overall population: In Yellowstone County, 10% of income eligible children were Hispanic/Latino and 23% were American Indian/Alaska Native in 2016. In Carbon County, Hispanic/Latino children made up half of the income eligible children in 2016. The Hispanic/Latino minority is the most rapidly rising minority in the service area.

The number of young children in foster care is rising in Yellowstone County: In the last five years, the number of children in foster care in Yellowstone county has nearly doubled (77%), with 461 total children under five at some point in SFY2017. In Carbon County, the number of children in foster care annually has remained small. In this region, 76.6% of removed had drugs or alcohol as an indicator. This is a higher proportion than for Montana.

Homelessness is a continuing concern, but significant gaps in characterizing young children remain: Experts on homelessness agree that the Billings has the best data, but it is highly likely that data available are missing some young children. HUD point in time data concentrates around Billings and found 53 children under the age of five in 2017. The number of homeless kindergarteners in Yellowstone County public schools was 47 in SY2015-2016.

The number of children with special needs is growing: Mirroring the population as a whole, children ages three to five who are served through public schools or public school co-ops are largely concentrated in Yellowstone County. 293 students in this age range were served in Yellowstone County in SY2016-2017. For these ages, Carbon County has the highest percentage of children identified at 8% of the age group population and significantly higher than in Yellowstone County (4.6%) and Montana (4.4%). The proportion of children identified with special needs in the three to five age group is lower than children in the overall three to twenty-one age group for both counties and Montana.

SERVICE NEEDS IN THE HEAD START, INC GEOGRAPHIC AREA

Significant service needs exist within the Head Start, Inc. service areas. Community services for Head Start eligible families are centered around Billings, Montana. Services are concentrated in Billings, and those without transportation and in rural areas, can be isolated from services that require travel.

Child care and early education services: This area appears to be both a priority, and asset and a challenge to provide within the service area. Yellowstone County has a far higher proportion of registered child care slots than Carbon County, compared to the number of children under five. The rural areas in both counties have few facilities in any location and are more negatively affected if a facility closes and is not replaced. In Carbon County, both Red Lodge and Joliet have been able to open new capacity after the Head Start sites closed in those locations. Ongoing challenges include availability, affordability of private facilities, hours offered, transportation, eligibility and awareness of scholarship opportunities.

Basic services to address poverty: Housing, food/nutrition, and transportation are the areas that were identified most frequently as needs within this area. For housing and transportation, available service is limited in terms of capacity, services offered, eligibility and geographic reach. 22% of Head Start families surveyed did not use personal transportation to get to Head Start sites; most of those relied on the bus. The Head Start bus was also rated “very useful” by over 40% of respondents. Food and nutrition services had identified limits, but appeared to be somewhat more available across the service area. It appears that many families who would qualify for nutrition assistance services do not access those services. Lack of transportation also was noted to affect ability to access many other services, and closure of the Red Lodge Office of Public Assistance may further limit access to some services in Carbon County.

Medical/Heath Services: Medical services are centered in Billings and has a broader range of services than in other areas of Montana. Carbon County and rural Yellowstone County are largely services by satellite services or by coming to Billings. Health coverage for children is high, though for adults with incomes below 200% FPL, 15% lack health insurance.

Mental Health Services: Mental health a top community concern. There are services for both children and adults, but there are gaps in the available network and capacity to serve families with young children. A majority of Head Start staff and community partners surveyed identified eligibility as a barrier to accessing children’s mental health. Among Head Start families that used mental health services, more had difficulty accessing services for adults than for children.

Substance abuse and addiction services: This was a top community priority. Programs to address this are available in the service region, but there were significant concerns about capacity, eligibility, and affordability. Drugs and alcohol have been an indicator in the 77% of foster care removals in the region.

Services for Children with special needs: Services that exist and were specifically identified as useful in the surveys conducted for this assessment. However, it appears that more early identification and services to young children would be useful.

Further education and resources to help adults with young children parent more effectively and to become fully self-sufficient through job training, education and employment was identified as areas that may need further capacity.

Community Partnerships, Networks and Referrals

Collaboration and partnerships were identified as positive assets in both counties. However, there were far more questions and lack of knowledge expressed about the type, effectiveness, and amount of need for many services in Carbon County.

Referrals and networking to help families access services was identified as an asset and a need. Head Start referrals to further services was rated “very useful” by 76% of families that had used the service.

1.0 OVERVIEW OF THE HEAD START, INC. GEOGRAPHIC, DEMOGRAPHIC AND SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS

1.1. INTRODUCTION

This community assessment focuses on three questions:

- What are the estimated children with priority needs are there within Head Start, Inc.'s geographic area of service?
- What information on trends and changes in priority populations can help plan for the future?
- What is the state of needed community and what are gaps in serving Head Start eligible families with young children?

Section one is an overview of the Head Start service area. Section two focuses on priority populations of young children. Section three focuses on community services that can meet the needs of Head Start eligible families and young children.

1.2 METHODOLOGY

The report relied on three primary sources of information:

- **Published information from public sources:** These quantitative and qualitative sources of information provide information on demographics, Head Start priority needs, and information about community needs and services.
- **Additional data from community partners:** Additional quantitative data about services and needs focused on children under five were additionally provided to develop a more detailed picture of the needs of young children and service provision.
- **Qualitative survey data from Head Start families, Head Start staff and community partners:** Qualitative information an access to services and assessment of challenges, opportunities and usefulness of existing services were used to further identify areas of strength and challenge in the Head Start, Inc. service area.

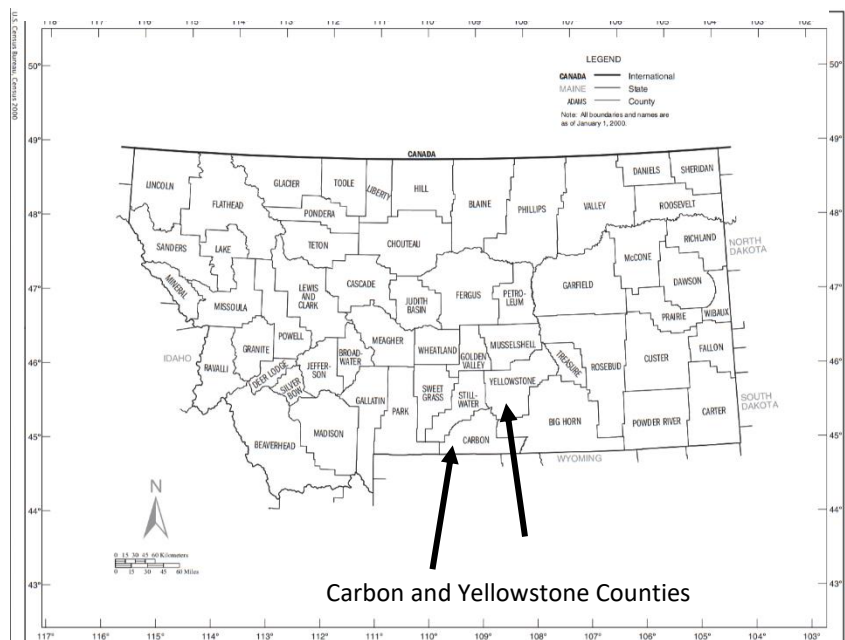
These three sources of data were used to characterize the community, family needs, and offer information that can help forecast future family needs for Head Start services.

1.3 HEAD START, INC SERVICE AREA

The Head Start, Inc. service area is Yellowstone and Carbon counties, with the exception of a small portion of the Yellowstone County that is with the Crow Reservation boundaries and served by a tribally based Head Start program.

Currently, Head Start, Inc. had 360 Head Start funded slots, 36 funded through a Montana funded preschool program and 8 served with fee-based services. children services in four locations: North Park and Terry Park in Billings, Lockwood (technically the eastern part of Billings, but maintains a separate identity) and Laurel.

Figure 1-1: Head Start, Inc. Service Area



1.3 POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

1.3.1 TOTAL POPULATION

Total population continues in Yellowstone County. In 2016, the total estimated population was 155,344 and the city of Billings was 112,572. (U.S. Census). Carbon County had a total population of 10,340 in 2016. In both counties, the total population for whom poverty state had been determined is slightly lower.

The estimated population under 5 in Carbon County is 414, 4% of the population, in 2016, down from an estimated 452 in 2015. An estimated 36% of those under 5 are 3 or 4. (US Census)

The estimated population under 5 in Yellowstone County was 10,097, 6.5% of the population in 2016, up from 9,990 or 6.5% of the population in 2015. An estimated 43% of those under 5 are 3 and 4. (US Census)

Table 1-1: Children under Five, Carbon and Yellowstone County Households, 2016				
	Carbon County		Yellowstone County	
Under 3 years	266	+/-44	5,799	+/-385
3 and 4 years	147	+/-43	4,313	+/-356

U.S. Census

1.3.2 ESTIMATE OF TOTAL POPULATION EXPERIENCING POVERTY OR NEAR POVERTY

Carbon and Yellowstone counties both have overall poverty levels below that of Montana as a whole. However, the distribution of population is not distributed evenly across both counties.

Table 1-2: Population with Income Below 100% of FPL and 100-149% of the FPL			
Location	Total Population for Whom Poverty Status Is Determined	% Below 100% of FPL 2011-2015	% Between 100-149% FPL, 2011-2015
Carbon County	10,259	10.8%	8.5%
East Carbon CCD	797	9.5%	6.6%
Fromberg-Bridger CCD	2,075	10.0%	7.7%
Joliet CCD	2,335	8.1%	5.9%
Red Lodge CCD	3,798	15.8%	8.4%
Roberts CCD	1,254	2.7%	16.5%
Yellowstone County	151,367	10.4%	9.6%
Billings CCD	108,940	11.8%	10.5%
Huntley Project CCD	3,839	15.1%	13.2%
Laurel CCD	17,925	5.0%	7.2%
Northeast CCD	383	5.2%	21.7%
Northwest CCD	7,984	6.0%	9.7%
Shepherd CCD	4,530	7.4%	3.6%
South Yellowstone CCD	7,776	7.0%	3.5%
Montana	998,314	14.9%	10.1%

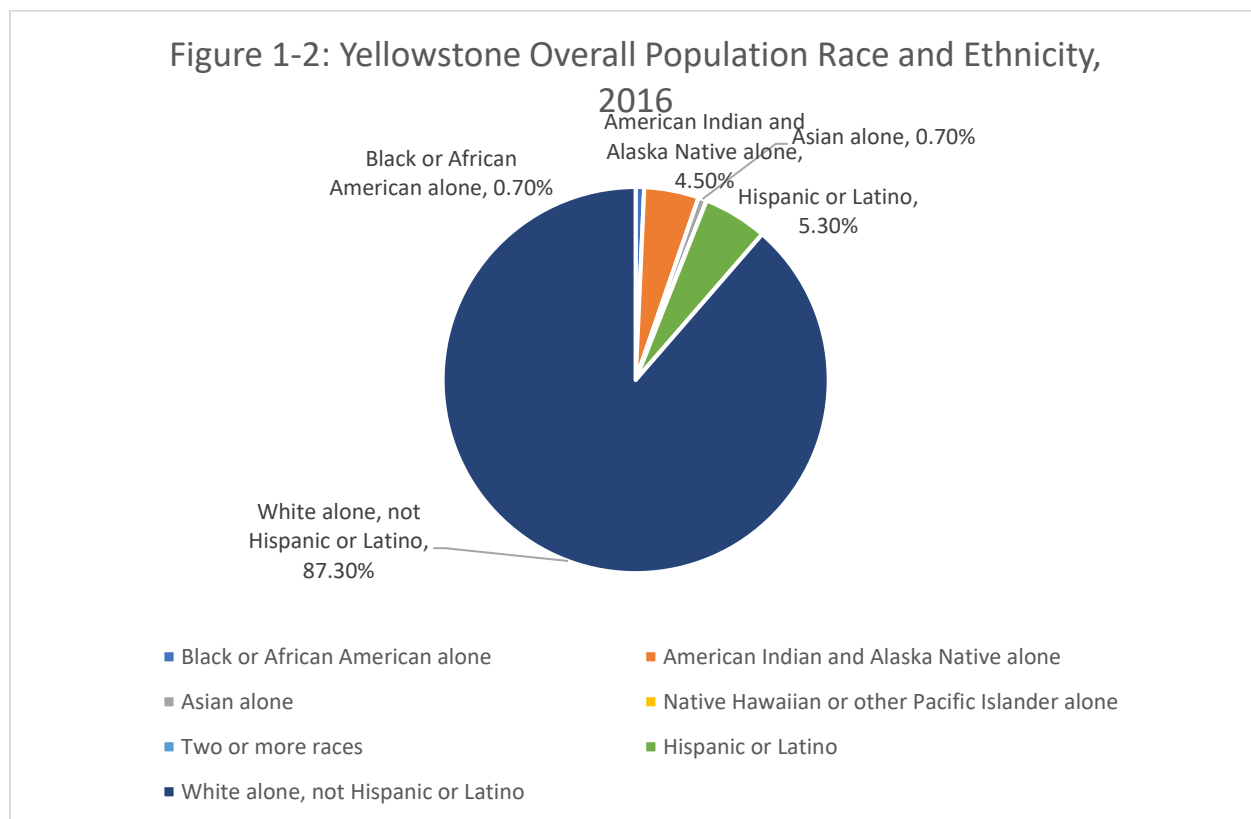
US Census, ACS 2012-2016, S0601

1.3.3 POPULATION RACE AND ETHNICITY

The three largest ethnic or racial groups in Yellowstone County are white non-Hispanic, Hispanic or Latino and American Indian/Alaska Native. The proportion of non-Hispanic whites has slightly decreased since 2010, while the proportion of American Indian/Alaska Native and Hispanic or Latino has increased since 2010. In Carbon County, the proportion of non-Hispanic whites has dropped slightly since 2010, with a very slight increase in American Indians/Alaska natives and growth in the Hispanic population. However, the proportion of total minority populations remains low in both counties.

Table 1-3: Yellowstone County Ethnic and Racial Composition							
Yellowstone County	Black or African American	American Indian and Alaska Native	Asian	Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	Two or more races	Hispanic or Latino	White alone, not Hispanic or Latino
2010	0.7%	3.9%	0.8%	0.2%	2.0%	4.6%	88.4%
2016	0.6%	4.5%	0.7%	0.0%	0.0%	5.3%	87.3%

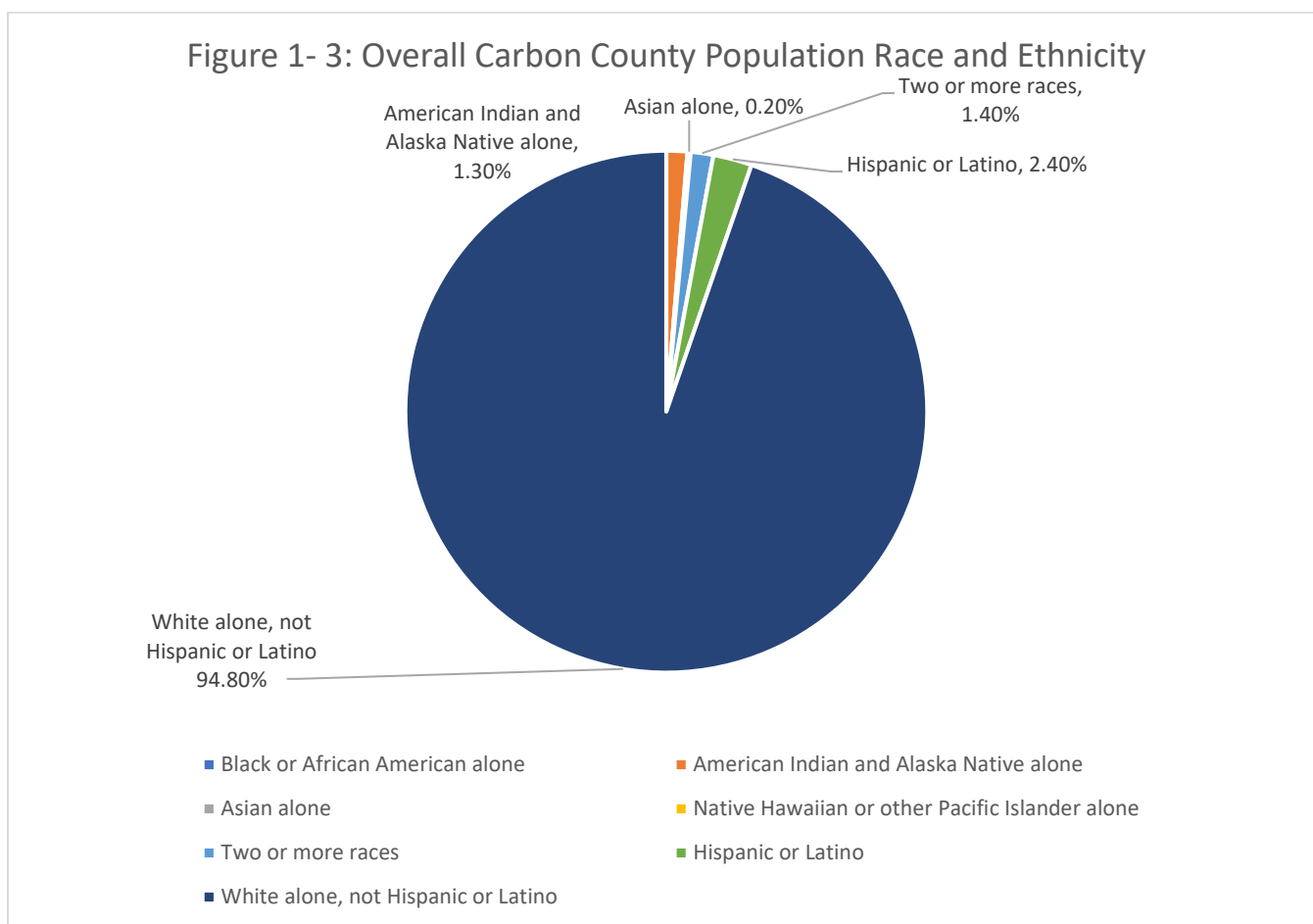
US Census; ACS, 2006-2010, 2012-2016



US Census, 2012-2016

Table 1-4: Carbon County Ethnic and Racial Composition							
Carbon County	Black or African American	American Indian and Alaska Native	Asian	Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	Two or more races	Hispanic or Latino	White alone, not Hispanic or Latino
2010	0.2%	1.1%	0.6%	0.0%	0.4%	1.7%	96.0%
2016	0.0%	1.3%	0.2%	0.0%	1.4%	2.4%	94.8%

US Census; ACS, 2006-2010, 2012-2016



US Census, 2012-2016

Non-English Speakers

Almost all households in Yellowstone and Carbon counties speak English well. In Carbon County, .4% of all households speak limited English and .8% of all households in Yellowstone County speak limited English. (US Census). In the November 2017 snapshot, Head Start had two students with moderate to limited English spoken. In Yellowstone County, Spanish

speakers make up the largest number of families with limited English while in Carbon County, the only estimated population with limited English spoke other Indo-European languages.

Emerging Minority Populations

Overall, the Hispanic/Latino population is growing in the population as a whole. For income eligible children under 5, the proportion of Hispanic/Latino children is higher than in the population as a whole (Section 2.2) Though the overall number of children who are Hispanic/Latino are still low compared to the total population, this is an emerging population in Yellowstone and Carbon counties. It appears that most of this population speaks English, but as the population continues to grow, it will be helpful to track whether the proportion of non-English speakers who could use language services increases.

Isolated Minority Populations

Native American/Alaska Native and Hispanic/Latino populations are the two largest minority groups in the area. Other racial and ethnic groups have such small populations that it is difficult to track any children under 5 who are on a consistent basis. In the total population, all minority groups have quite small populations, meaning that children and families may feel isolated or endure being singled out. Prejudice was only directly noted in one survey response from professionals in the field, but it may be an issue for some families and children.

1.3.3 POPULATION CHANGE

In any estimate of future children, an estimate of the rate of growth is helpful, since it can help refine information about whether current need is likely to be sustainable. One difficulty is that economic reversals (positive or negative) may happen quite quickly, especially in smaller towns with economies that aren't diversified, so all projections are somewhat tentative. Still, it is helpful to keep in mind the direction and general magnitude of recent population change trends.

Overall, Yellowstone County is younger, has a higher proportion of young children and is growing. Carbon County is aging, has a falling proportion of young children, and its small number of new residents is coming from in-migration.

County Population Change

Montana has counties experience rapid growth, some growth, flat and falling populations. Yellowstone county is growing faster than most other counties in Montana. Carbon County is growing slightly.

Overall growth is not the only measure of growth. A community rapidly adding retirees will have falling preschool services need while one with relatively flat growth, but a very young population, may see increasing need for preschool services.

Table 1-5: Cumulative Estimates of the Components of Population Change							
April 1, 2010 to July 1, 2016							
			Vital Events		Net Migration		
Geography	Total Population Increase	Natural	Births	Deaths	Total	International	Domestic
Carbon County	382	-112	471	583	513	21	492
Yellowstone County	10,465	3,784	12,526	8,742	6,586	287	6,200

U.S. Census; PEPTCOMP, 2016 Population Estimate

Median Age and Population Composition

Table 1-6: Median Age		
Location	Median Age (2007-2011)	Median Age in (2011-2015)
Carbon County	47.5	49.1
Yellowstone County	38.4	38.0
Montana	39.8	39.7

US Census

Carbon County continued to see a trend toward rising median age. Yellowstone County, in contrast, has median age moving slightly younger.

Birth and death rates can also give a sense of what proportion of the population growth is due to new children and what proportion is due to in-migration of a combination of adults and children. For Yellowstone County, there were 1,931 births in 2016 and 78 in Carbon County.

Table 1-7: Birth and Death Rates			
Location	1990-1999	2000-2006	2007-2014
	Birth Rates (per 1,000)		
Yellowstone County	13.7	13.6	13.4
Carbon County	10.5	9.0	NA
	Death Rates (per 1,000)		
Yellowstone County	8.1	8.9	9.0
Carbon County	10.7	9.8	9.1

City-data.com

Yellowstone has higher birth rates than death rates. Population is growing because births exceed deaths. In Carbon County, deaths exceed births. This is another indicator that population is aging in Carbon County, in contrast to Yellowstone County.

1.3.4 EXPECTED TRENDS IN THE POPULATION OF YOUNG CHILD

It is expected that the number of children below the age of 5 in Carbon County will decline or be flat compared to current levels, though there may be pockets of growth or decline and natural variation from year to year will occur. Overall, this growth in children under age five is coming from in-migration.

In Yellowstone County, there will be additional growth in the number of young children ages 0-4 as well as in-migration. Because the total population is so large, even a small change in overall population growth adds several more additional children each year.

Yellowstone County is population under 5 slowly dropping in total proportion – 6.8% in 2010; 6.5% in 2016. There was 7.1% overall population growth between 2010 and 2016, contributing to the overall increase in number of young children.

In Carbon County, the population under 5 dropping is also slowing dropping in total proportion: 4.1% in 2010 and 3.7% in 2016 rate in total population.

Economic conditions drive a lot of growth. If conditions change, positively or negatively, and it could affect both the growth rate in the number of young children in an area and the total population.

Transience and turnover in a population can also have significant influence on the population of children in a given location. Transience and movement was frequently mentioned as a prevalent factor for many families. Transience, particularly for income-eligible families was mentioned as factor in Lockwood and Bridger. For purposes of planning, it is one more source of uncertainty in the overall Head Start eligible population in any given year.

1.4 COST OF LIVING, EMPLOYMENT AND ECONOMIC FACTORS

1.4.1 EMPLOYMENT AND WORKFORCE PARTICIPATION

Unemployment rates are below Montana and U.S. rates for both counties. In September 2017, Yellowstone County has a 3.1% unemployment rate, Carbon County has a 3.4% unemployment rate, and Montana has a 3.9% unemployment rate. The United States had a 4.1% unemployment rate. For all four statistics, the unemployment rate has been trending in a mostly downward direction since 2010 at the height of the recession. (Bureau Labor Statistics, 2017) Estimated unemployment rates are much higher for those in poverty seeking work who were ages 20 to 24. In 2016, there was an estimated 22.9% unemployment rate in Carbon County and 16.6% unemployment rate for those in poverty seeking work in Yellowstone County.

Workforce participation also matters, since people who are not seeking work are not counted in unemployment statistics and lack income. Participation in the labor force is high in most categories, and income eligible Head Start families have roughly similar workforce participation (Appendix B)

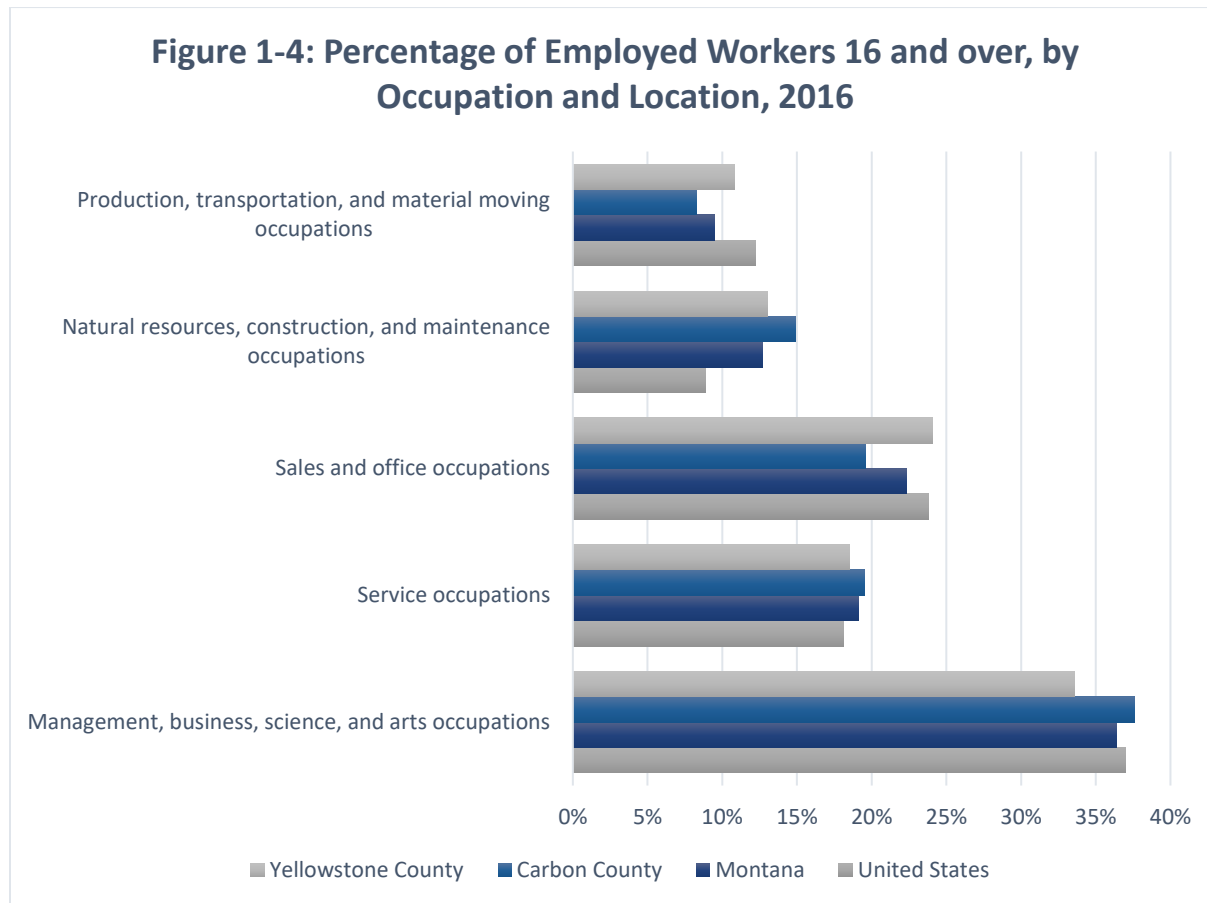
Table 1-8: Labor Force Participation and Employment		
Population Characteristic	Yellowstone County	Carbon County
Population 20-64	91,420	5,890
Male, Total	87.4% of 45,306	85.2% of 3,019
Male, Labor Force Participation	87.4%	85.2%
Female, Total	76.2% of 46,114	71% of 2,986
Female, Children under 6, labor force participation	75.2% of 3,821	72.7% of 88
Female, children under 6 and 6 to 17, labor force participation	68.9% of 3,649	62.4% of 170
Below poverty level, labor force participation	52.4% of 9,150	49.0% of 535

US Census, ACS 2012-2016

Educational attainment also is an indicator on the types of jobs available. For the population 25 years old and over, 6.7% have not attained a high school degree and another 32.7% have are only high school graduates. Carbon County is similar with 6.1% without a high school degree and another 29.6% have only a high school degree. Montana educational attainment is between the two with 7.1% and 29.8% are high school graduates. Montana has a larger proportion of college

graduates (20.2%) than Carbon County (19.6%) but a smaller proportion than Yellowstone County (20.4%) though the proportions are very close. These rates all represent slightly higher levels of educational attainment than the United States as a whole. (US Census)

Occupation are distributed similarly to those across the United States.



US Census, 2012-2016

1.4.2 INCOME

In Yellowstone County, median household income \$55,032 and median income per capita was \$30,516. In Carbon County, the median household income was \$52,869 and per capita income was \$30,461. For Montana, the median household income was \$48,380, individual income was \$27,3019 and for the United States, it was \$55,322 and \$29,829. (US Census)

In Carbon County, 44.5% of individuals 15 or older make less than \$25,000 per year, while in Yellowstone County, 41% make less than that level of income.

1.4.2 COST OF LIVING

Median household wages are very close to the median for the United States and higher than Montana as a whole. Cost of living is also very close to the median for the United States, with costs slightly higher than the median set at 100 in cost of living estimates.

Table 1-9: Cost of Living, Selected Areas Yellowstone and Carbon Counties							
Location	Overall	Grocery	Health	Housing	Utilities	Transportation	Average Rent, 3 bedrooms
Yellowstone County	103	100.3	101	109	92	96	\$1,080
Laurel	101	100.3	101	104	92	96	\$960
Billings	103	100.3	101	109	92	96	\$1,130
Shepherd	110	100.3	101	132	92	96	\$1,380
Huntley	108	100.3	101	126	92	96	\$1,100
Carbon County	106	101.9	100	117	94	96	\$1,080
Red Lodge	108	101.9	100	122	94	96	\$1,210
Bridger	97	101.9	100	89	94	96	\$930
Joliet	97	101.9	100	89	94	96	\$930
Montana	103	108.9	105	104	93	98	\$1,044
U.S.	100	100	100	100	100	100	\$1,379

Sperlings Best Places, November, 2017

1.4.3 HOUSING

Housing is above Montana median prices in both counties. Median gross rent (which includes utilities) was \$796 month in Yellowstone County in 2016 and \$770 in Carbon County. This compares favorably to the national median gross rent of \$949, but unfavorably to the Montana median rate of \$732 (US Census). For low income residents, the amount of income devoted to rent is often high. Median values for owner-occupied housing was higher than the (\$184,700) and state median (199,700) rates with median prices of \$201,500 in Yellowstone County and \$217,700 in Carbon County for the period 2012-2016 (US Census).

- In **Carbon County**, 98% of households whose gross rent could be determined with incomes under \$10,000 had gross rental rates of 50% or more of their incomes. 61% of households with incomes of \$10,000 to \$19,999 had gross rents of 50% or more of their income and for householders with incomes of \$20,000 to \$34,999, no households had gross rents of 50% or more, but 8% had gross rent that was 40-49.9% of the household income.
- In **Yellowstone County**, 77% of households whose gross rent could be determined with incomes under \$10,000 had gross rental rates of 50% or more of their incomes. 56% of households with incomes of \$10,000 to \$19,999 had gross rents of 50% or more of their income and for householders with incomes of \$20,000 to \$34,999, 16% households had gross rents of 50% or more, and another 15% had gross rent that was 40-49.9% of the household income. (US Census)

Vacancy rates for rentals are below national averages in most locations in Yellowstone and Carbon counties, which can make it difficult to find adequate housing. In December 2017, Yellowstone County had a 1.7% vacancy rate, compared to 2.34% for the U.S. Carbon County as a whole had a 2.75% vacancy rate, but that appears to be only because Red Lodge has a high vacancy rate of 5.76%, which skews the data for the county. (Sperling Best Places)

Family Services, which provides crisis services, conducted a needs analysis of their clients and found that 80% live in unstable circumstances. 8% of their clients were living in motels, couch-surfing or homeless, and 34% live with more than one family unit in a single-family home. (Family Services) Homeless is present in the area, though it is difficult to characterize the full extent of the need. Section 2.4 has information on homelessness among young children.

Overall, these characteristics show a housing market that is tight, with relatively low availability and upward pressure on rents and owner-owned homes. For all income eligible Head Start families, there is a greater than 50% chance that housing will consume at least 50% of their household income.

1.5 CRIME

Crime rates for both violent and property crimes are highest in Billings within the service area. Crime does appear to be higher in denser population centers, though Red Lodge possibly has some crime at higher rates than its total population might suggest.

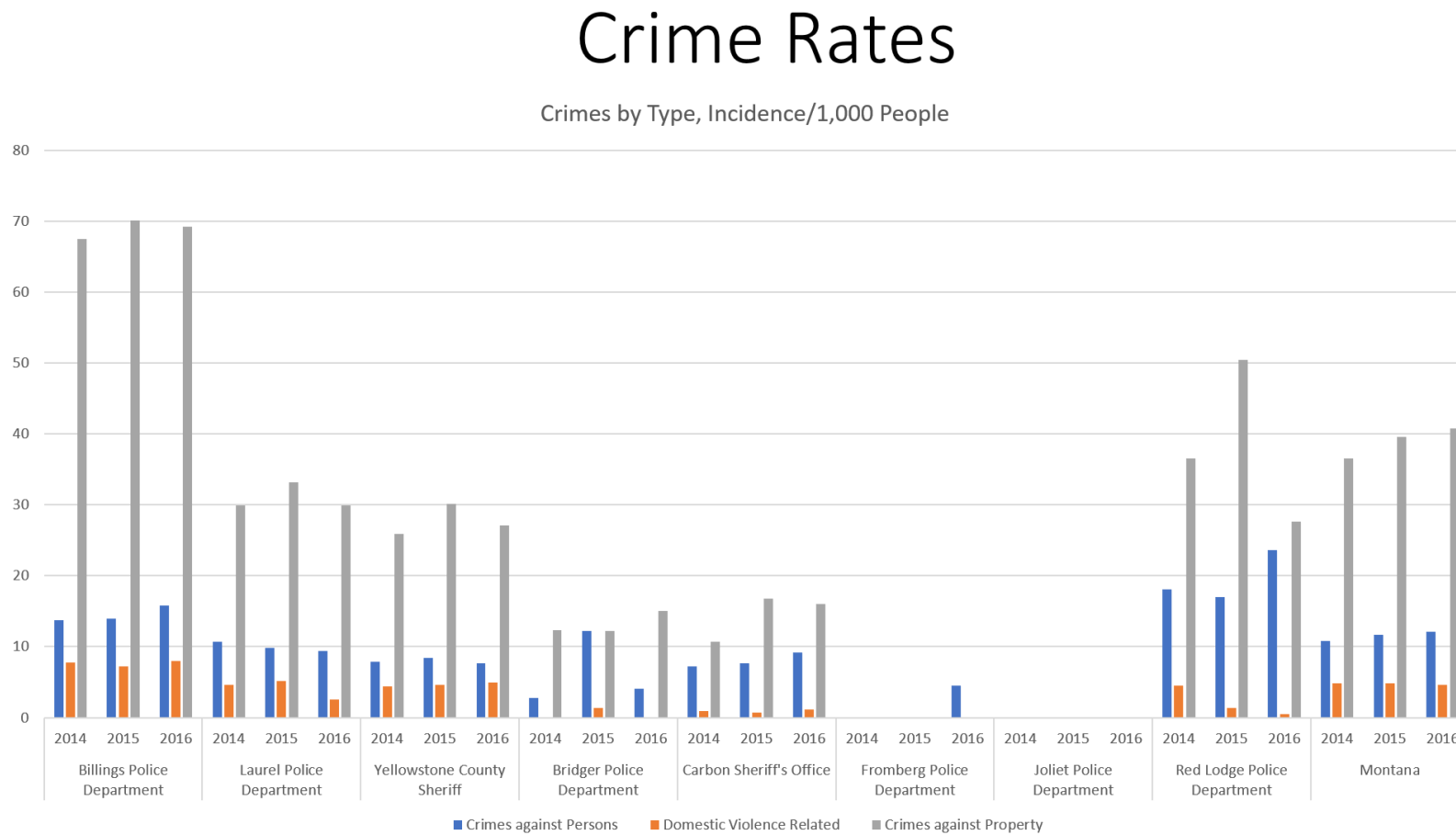
There are also more registered violent and sexual offenders in the core areas around North Park and Terry Park than the Lockwood and Laurel sites.

Table 1-10: Registered Sexual and Violent Offenders within one Mile of Head Start Sites						
	Carbon County	Yellowstone County	North Park	Terry Park**	Laurel	Lockwood
All offenders:	32	1284	126	105	26	10
Sexual offenders	14	476	38	39	11	3
Violent offenders	18	938	85	68	16	7

Department of Justice, Registered Sexual and Violent Offender Database, Retrieved 1/4/18

**Offenders without addresses are coded to the police department within a mile of this site. Obvious instances were removed, but there may still be some instances still left with an offender coded to this neighborhood, who does not live here.

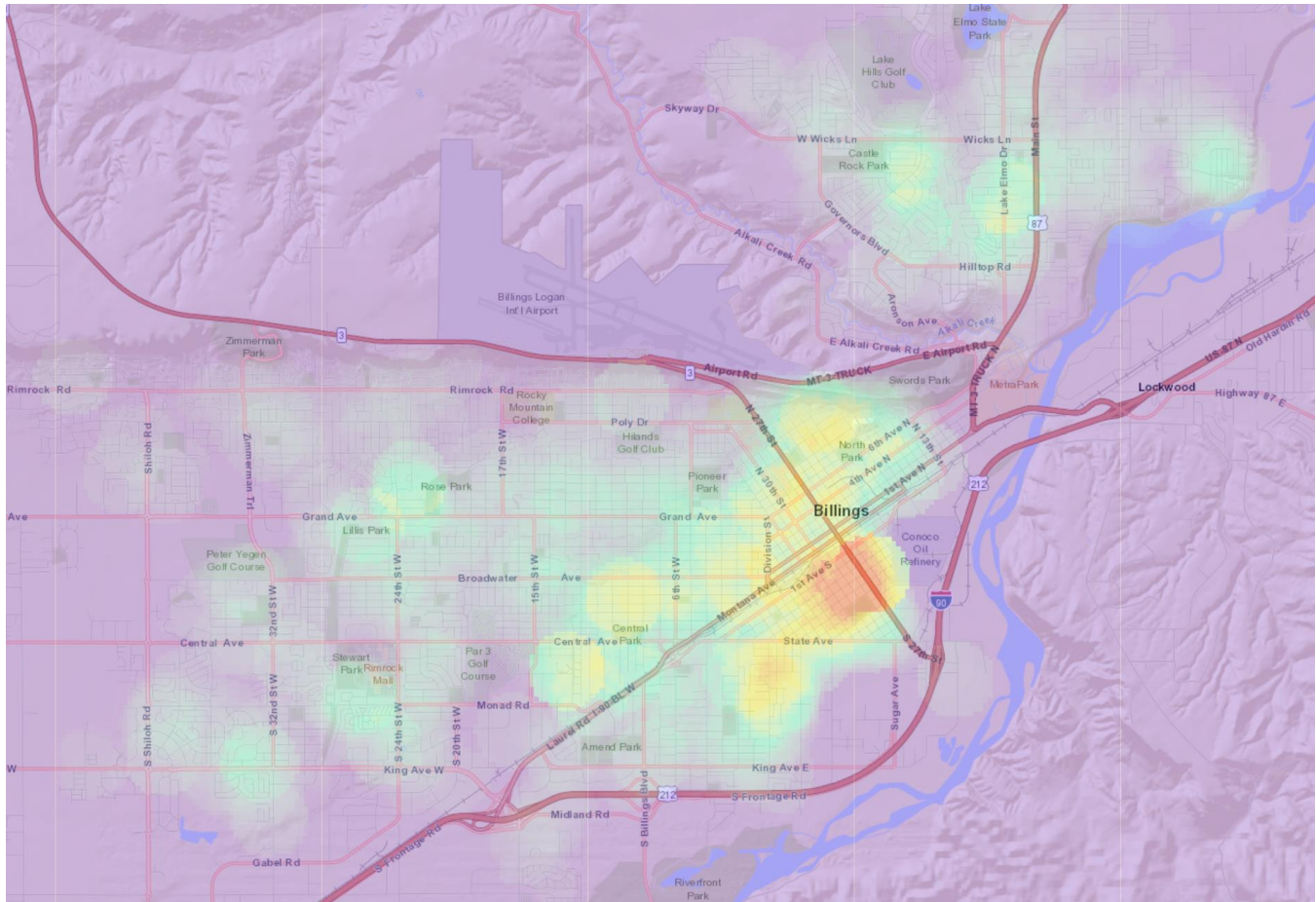
Figure 1-5: Crime Rates by Type, Incidence/1,000 People



Source: MT Board of Crime Control

United Way of Yellowstone County analyzed that density of crimes affecting children, using Yellowstone County crime data from 2010 to 2014 to analyze the Billings area. Purple is the lowest density areas are red the highest density of crimes. The highest density of crimes affecting children are in the area around the Terry Park Head Start site, with other clusters in the north and west parts of the core areas of Billings.

Figure 1-6: Density of Crimes Affecting Children in Billings Metro Area, 2010-2014



Source: United Way of Yellowstone County, 2016

2.0 HEAD START PRIORITY POPULATIONS

Head Start has priority to meet the needs of income-eligible children, those experiencing homelessness, currently in foster care and children with special needs. This section characterizes the extent of need in these populations and identifies gaps in current information.

2.1 ESTIMATE OF INCOME ELIGIBLE CHILDREN

Within Carbon and Yellowstone counties, the population of young children who are income eligible is concentrated primarily in the Billings metropolitan area. Economic recovery has reduced the percentage of children under five experiencing poverty overall, but substantial need for Head Start preschool services based on income eligibility continues to outstrip the current capacity to serve.

Explorers Academy: Meeting Children's Needs

- 91% of children enrolled in January 2017 were lived in households that had incomes below 100% of the federal poverty level
- 37% of Head Start students are members of a minority group in 2017-2018. This is 5% less than the proportion of minority population among children under five in poverty in Yellowstone County and far higher than the overall population
- 16% of students had one or more identified special needs and were receiving help in January 2018
- Children in foster care make up 12% of children recorded January 2017
- 17 children enrolled were homeless in January 2017
- 6% of children enrolled in November 2017 lived in households receiving public assistance.

2.1.1 ESTIMATE OF CHILDREN IN HOUSEHOLDS WITH INCOME BELOW 100% FPL

An important eligibility factor for Head Start is poverty status. Knowing the estimated number and trends in the population of children in poverty is helpful for locating sites and planning capacity.

The 2012-2016 estimate show a reduction in poverty levels in Yellowstone and Carbon counties. The 2011-2015 US Census community survey estimated about 1,940 children under five in poverty and about 103 in Carbon County. Carbon County's numbers should be used with some care, since the confidence interval is quite large. It is possible that there were about the same number of children as last year, if the last sample skewed high and this one skewed low. However, it is very likely that fewer young children are in poverty than were in the previous year in both counties.

Table 2-1: Overall Population of Children and Income Eligible Children under Five

Location	Total Population 2016 (V2016)	Population < 5 2016	Percent of Total Population < 5 (2016)	Children < 5, in poverty	% in Poverty < 5
Yellowstone County	151,367	9,708	6.50%	1,669	17.2% (+/-3.0%)
Carbon County	10,259	404	4.00%	52	12.9%(+/-8.5%)

US Census, ACS 2012-2016. Note: for these figures, only the population for whom poverty status is determined are reported, so the population numbers are slightly smaller than the total reported population.

Children ages three and four are about 40% of the under-five cohort (36% in Carbon County and 43% in Yellowstone County). This means that there are about 668 children ages three and four in Yellowstone County and about 20 three and four-year-old children in Carbon County who were income eligible for Head Start services in 2016. If economic growth and population growth factors stay constant, it is likely that Carbon County will have about the same number of income eligible children in the future and Yellowstone County will either see some increases due to a growing population. Greater workforce participation could lower the number in either county, though not substantially due to the high rate of participation already.

2.1.2 GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION OF INCOME ELIGIBLE CHILDREN

Children are concentrated in the Billings metropolitan area. Some neighborhoods in Billings, Huntley Project and southern Carbon county are the areas with the highest proportion of children under 5 that are experiencing poverty. Huntley Project is the area that appears to be having the most rapidly growing population of children in poverty in the Head Start, Inc. service area.

Table 2-2: Estimate of Eligible Children in Carbon County < 100% FPL (2016)						
Location	Total Population for Whom Poverty Status Determined	Percent Population under 5 (%)	Population < 5	Children < 5, < 100% FPL	% < 100% FPL < 5	Estimated Children 3-4, < 100% FPL
Carbon County	10,259	3.9%	404	52	12.9% (+/-8.5%)	20
East Carbon CCD	797	5.0%	40	19	47.5% (+/-50.9%)	8
Bridger-Fromberg CCD	2,075	3.4%	70	2	2.9% (+/-6.7%)	1
Joliet CCD	2,335	5.3%	123	0	0%	0
Red Lodge CCD	3,798	2.8%	106	31	29.2% (+/-18.5%)	12
Roberts CCD	1,254	5.2%	65	0	0%	0

US Census, ACS, 2012-2016. Children ages 3 and 4 are estimated at 40% of the under 5 population. The true number may be a little lower, but a lot of uncertainty exists in the numbers for these population breakdowns.

Every area of Carbon County has fewer children under 5 than the year before except the Roberts CCD. The number of children under five in poverty dropped by half, from an estimated 103 to 52. Concentrations of children in poverty who would be income eligible for Head Start services are in East Carbon and Red Lodge CCDs. These are the two areas furthest from Billings.

Table 2-3: Estimate of Eligible Children in Yellowstone County < 100% FPL (2016)

Location	Total Population for Whom Poverty Status Has Been Determined	Percent Population < 5 (%)	Population < 5	Children < 5, < 100% FPL	% < 100% FPL < 5	Children 3-4, < 100% FPL
Yellowstone County	151,367	6.5%	9,708	1,669	17.2% (+/- 3.0%)	668
Huntley Project CCD	3,839	11.9%	455	122	26.8% (+/- 21.3%)	49
Laurel CCD	17,925	5.4%	959	150	15.6% (+/- 10.8%)	60
Northeast CCD	383	12.0%	46	0	0%	0
Northwest CCD	7,984	6.4%	511	11	2.2% (+/- 2.3%)	4
Shepherd CCD	4,530	4.2%	191	8	4.2% (+/- 6.8%)	3
South Yellowstone CCD	7,766	6.0%	469	49	10.4%(+/- 8.2%)	20
Billings CCD*	108,940	6.5%	7,117	1,329	18.7% (+/- 3.5%)	532

US Census, ACS 2012-2016, S1701. Children ages 3 and 4 are estimated at 40% of the under 5 population. The true number may be a little higher, but a lot of uncertainty exists in the numbers for these population breakdowns.

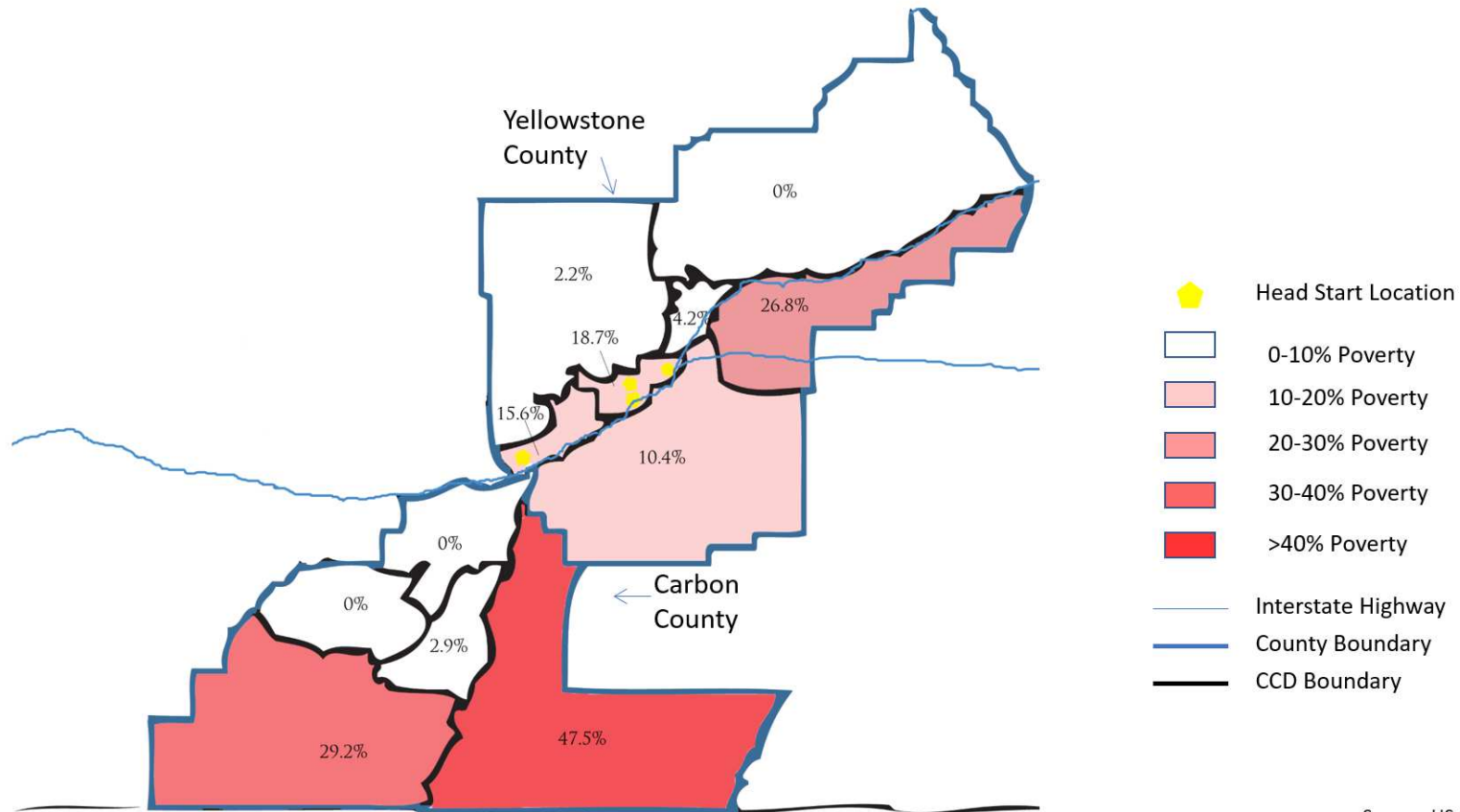
The total number of children in poverty who would be income eligible for Head Start services has dropped since 2015 in Yellowstone County, due to a drop in the poverty level. The overall number of children under continues to grow. As in the past, the large majority of children under five who are in the Billings CCD. Huntley Project CCD saw a slight drop from 128 to 122 estimated income eligible three and four-year old children. The Huntley Project area is seeing a continued rise in overall children under the age of five. Though the total number of income eligible children in the service area has dropped since 2015, the estimated number of income eligible children that Head Start, Inc. could serve with its current 360 Head Start funded slots is only 50% of the income eligible population.

Within Billings, pockets of high poverty concentration are centered on some downtown, north and south side neighborhoods as well as the southern part of the west side. These neighborhoods are sometimes immediately adjacent to areas with almost no children under five in poverty. The North Park neighborhood continues to have a majority (52.3%) children under five in poverty, though the 90 children is a smaller total number than some of the largest neighborhoods. The East Heights neighborhood had 32.2% children under five in poverty, with 122 children, while the West Heights has a much lower proportion of children in poverty. The downtown area has significant contrasts in number of children and intensity of need. Census tract 5 has 58.7% of children under 5 in poverty (an estimated 91 children) and another 58 children in census tract 12 to the west and another 49 in census tract 6 to the immediate north. The area immediately east of Zoo Drive and north of I-90 has 200 children under five in poverty between census tracts 17.03 and 17.04. Southwest has an estimated 283 children under five in poverty in Census tract 9, between I-90 and State street. The census tract (8) in Lockwood continues to have an estimated 27 children in poverty, but at a much lower (18%) rate than the more economically disadvantaged neighborhoods in Billings.

Figure 2-1: Percentage Head Start Income Eligible Children

Potential Head Start Income Eligible Children

Carbon and Yellowstone Counties, estimated percent children under 5, 2016

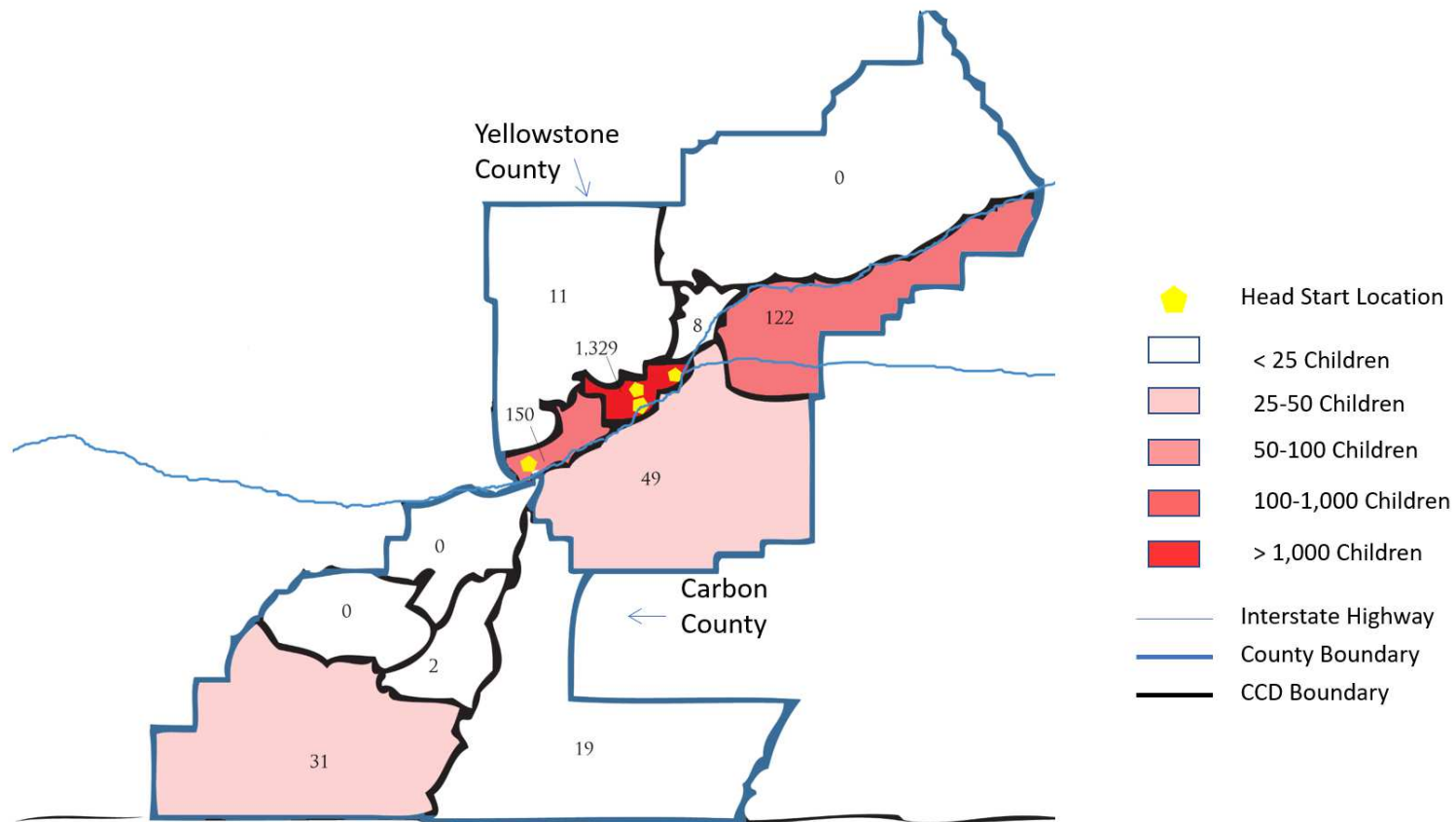


Source: US Census, 2016

Figure 2-2: Potential Number Head Start Income Eligible Children

Potential Head Start Income Eligible Children

Carbon and Yellowstone Counties, estimated percent children under 5, 2016



Source: US Census, 2016

2.2 RACE AND ETHNICITY AMONG INCOME ELIGIBLE CHILDREN

White, Hispanic or Latino and American Indian/Alaska Native are the three biggest identified racial groups in Yellowstone County. Two or more races also appears in Yellowstone County as a relatively large minority. Since part of Yellowstone County lies within the bounds of the Crow Reservation, it is likely that the total number of children under 5 who are within the Head Start, Inc. boundaries is slightly lower than the total listed for the county.

In Carbon County, the population is mostly white, with Hispanic/Latino as a small but growing population.

Black or African American, Asian, and native Hawaiian children are present in very small numbers in both counties (recorded at zero in sampling data). The data these minority populations show very high uncertainty as to the total number of children in these groups, so the it is likely that their population distribution is much like that of the population of the whole in these two counties.

Carbon County	Black or African American alone	American Indian and Alaska Native alone	Asian alone	Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander alone	Two or more races	Hispanic or Latino	White alone, not Hispanic or Latino
2016	0	0	0	0	0	26	26
2010	24	0	0	0	0	0	59

US Census, ACS, 2006-2010, 2011-2016

Figure 2-3: Percent of Head Start Income Eligible Children under Five
Carbon County, 2016

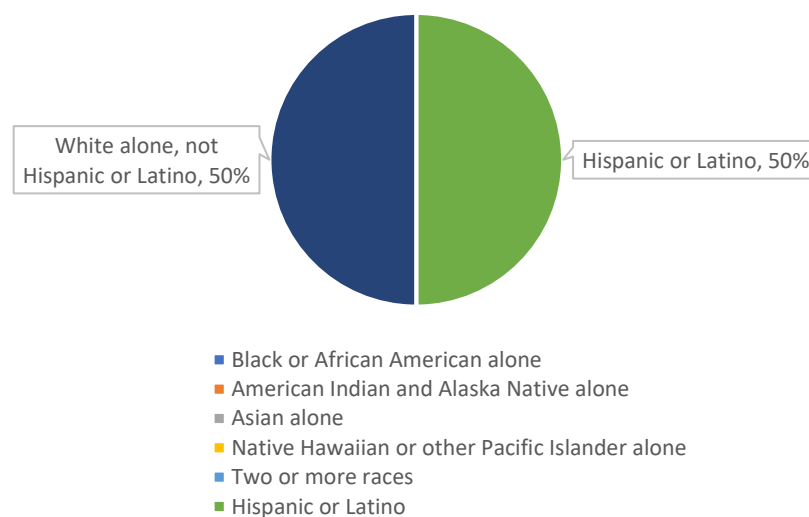
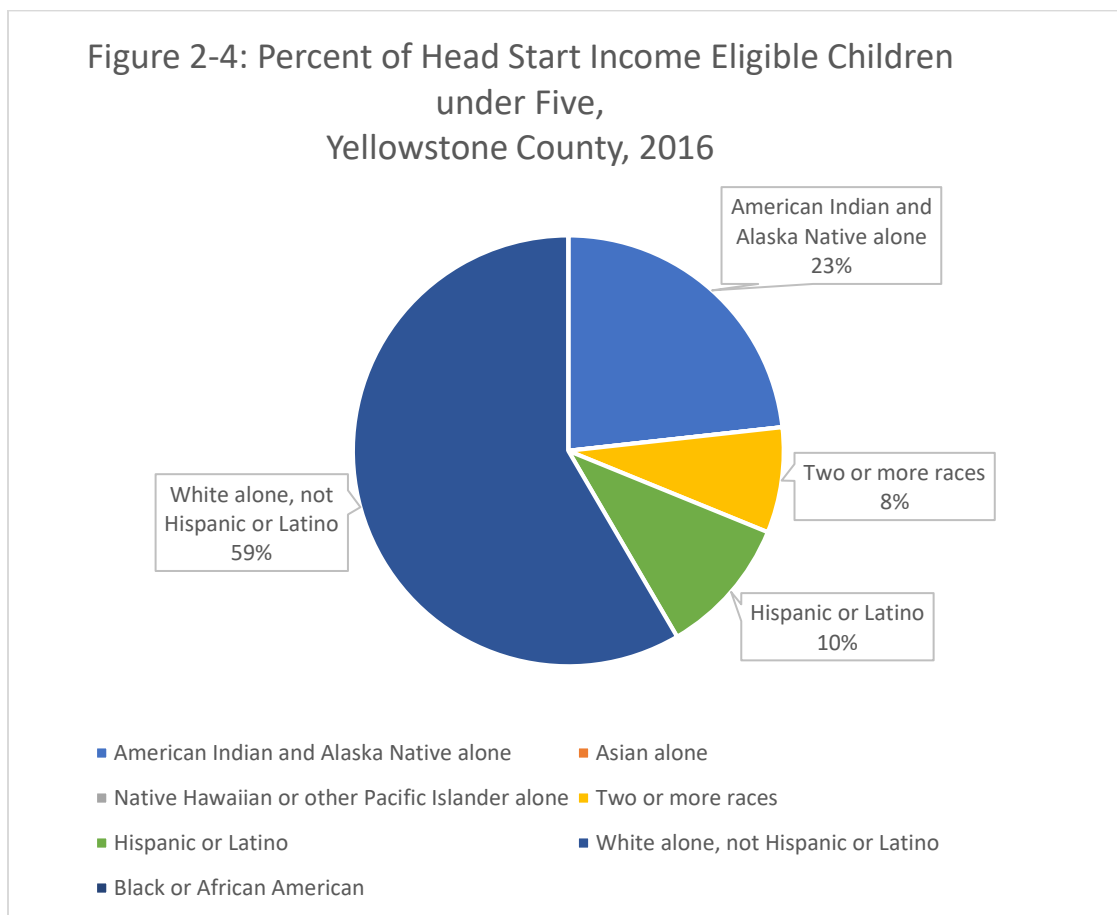


Table 2-5: Yellowstone County Estimates of Race and Ethnicity for Income Eligible Children under 5							
Yellowstone County	Black or African American alone	American Indian and Alaska Native alone	Asian alone	Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander alone	Two or more races	Hispanic or Latino	White alone, not Hispanic or Latino
2011-2016	0	411	0	0	169	184	1,033
2006-2010	0	173	0	0	226	329	1,112

US Census, ACS, 2006-2010 2011-2016



In both counties, minority populations are income eligible for Head Start services at higher rates compared to the population as a whole.

CURRENT HEAD START ENROLLEES

2.2.1 HEAD START ETHNIC AND RACIAL DEMOGRAPHICS

Table 2-6: Head Start Ethnic and Racial Composition, 2017-2018 Preschool Year										
Explorers Academy	Total	Black	White	Hispanic /Latino	Indian Alaskan	Asian	Pacific Islander	Other	Unspecified	Multi/Bi-racial
Totals:	366	5	212	0	66	0	3	1	1	61

Head Start Data, September, 2017. Note that Hispanic/Latino children were coded as multi/biracial or white.

Head Start had 366 students with racial or ethnic data recorded in the 2016-2017 preschool year children enrolled through Head Start, the Montana preschool funding or through a fee-for-service slot. American Indian/Alaska Natives is the largest reported minority, representing 18% of students. Hispanic or Latino students are enrolled, but their numbers are not possible to pull from more recent data, since they were either recorded under white or multi/biracial. Multiracial/biracial students make up 17% of students. Overall, 37% of the enrolled preschools are identified as belonging to a minority racial or ethnic group.

Two children use a language other than English as primary or moderate communication, though in both cases the language is not Spanish.

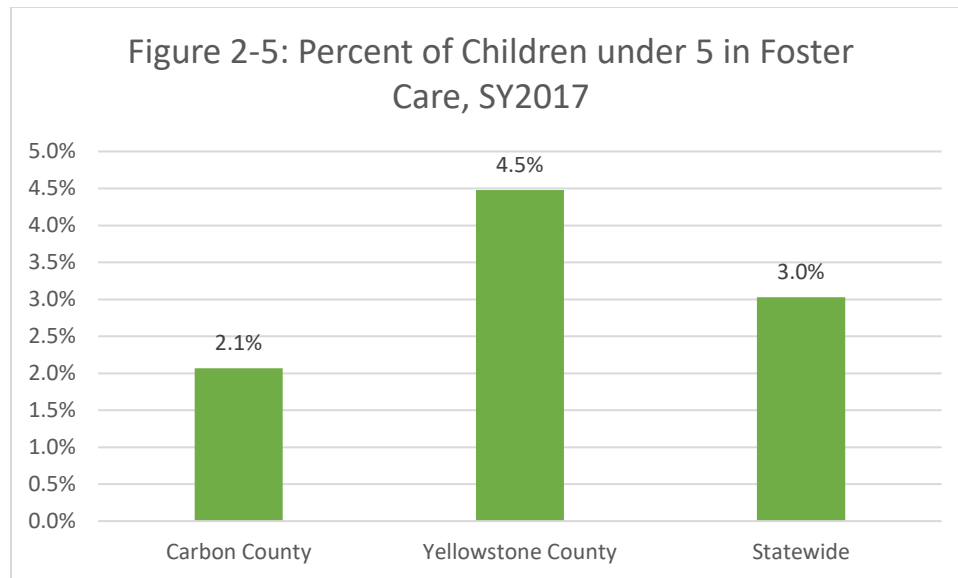
2.3 CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE

Children in foster care are a priority for Head Start enrollment. In Montana, children in foster care have been rising. In December 2016, Montana had 3,300 children in foster care, rising to 3,925 in December 2017 (Bozeman Daily Chronicle, January 18, 2018). In Yellowstone County, the number of children under five in foster care has increased. In Carbon County, the trend is not clear, but the number of children under five in foster care is very small. All data are nontribal, since both Carbon County and Yellowstone County are recorded as zero cases.

Table 2-7: Children in Foster Care under the Age of Five					
	SFY2013	SFY2014	SFY2015	SFY2016	SFY2017
Yellowstone County					
Total Number of Foster Care Cases	261	279	340	361	461
Total Children Entered or Exited Care	207	214	293	327	359

Source, DPHHS, Retrieved December, 2017

Carbon County had very small numbers of children under 5 in foster care over the entire period, but the number remained under 10 for any given fiscal year with no clear trend in any direction in the number of cases.



Source: Derived from DPHHS and US Census data

In January, 2018, Head Start had 44 children enrolled who were currently in foster care. That is 12% of the total number of those identified in the Head Start January 2018 snapshot and almost three times the proportion of children in the total population in foster care in Yellowstone County who are under five. This number is almost 10% of the total children under five who were in foster care in SFY2017 in Carbon and Yellowstone Counties.

In the region containing both Carbon and Yellowstone counties, drug and alcohol use are major contributing factors for Division of Child and Family Services child removal cases. In the July 10, 2017 snapshot, DCFS recorded methamphetamine use in 53.5% of open cases, marijuana in 12.6% of cases, and alcohol in 11.5% of cases in Region 3, (South Central) the region that contains both Carbon and Yellowstone counties. Drugs or alcohol were not recorded in only 23.4% of all open cases in the region. Only Region 1 (Eastern) had a lower total of open DCFS cases that did not involve drugs with a 16.9% rate.

The Department of Justice has completed a review of child deaths among those who had been referred to Montana Division of Child and Family Services within a year of their deaths. Of the fourteen, ten were infants and drug or alcohol use was considered a factor in nine of fourteen of those deaths (Bozeman Daily Chronicle). The review recommended further drug treatment services. Substance abuse and addiction is identified as one a major community concerns and is discussed in more detail in Section 3.6.

2.4 CHILDREN EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

Children experiencing homelessness are a vulnerable population. Unfortunately, though significant efforts are being made in the area to provide services and identify families in need, accurate data that experts feel is also comprehensive is lacking. The data here provide snapshots, but gaps identified in fully identifying the extent of this condition include:

- Variety of definitions of homelessness so data collected is not all directly comparable
- Variability in time of homeless needs: on any given day, the number of children that are homeless in our area could be quite different

- Sparse collection of data outside Billings. Carbon County reports no homeless children and acquiring an accurate picture in such a small and dispersed population is difficult
- Stigma associated with homelessness is such that it is likely that families may not report their status.

The section on community services has more information on services.

Table 2-8: HUD Homeless Households Survey, 2015 - 2017				
District 7, Children 0-4	Emergency	Transitional	Unsheltered	Total
2017	18	7	28	53
2016	3	5	22	38
2015	3	4	4	10

Montana Homeless Survey, 2017.

District 7 is Yellowstone, Carbon, Big Horn, Stillwater, and Sweetgrass Counties

The data in Table 2-7 follow the HUD definitions of homelessness, so some people who are homeless or have housing insecurity are not captured by these data. It was also reported that these numbers for young children only really cover the Billings area, rather than the entire district 7. New coordinated entry methodology being employed in 2018 will help track homelessness in a more continuous fashion and hopefully over a somewhat wider geographic area. (Montana Continuum of Care, Bob Buzzas, November 21, 2017)

Table 2-9: Homeless Children Enrolled in Public School									
	2013-2014			2014-2015			2015-2016		
	Pre-K	K	All Grades	Pre-K	K	All Grades	Pre-K	K	All Grades
Carbon County	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Yellowstone County	0	65	598	14	59	652	0	47	583
Montana	17	241	2,634	25	293	3,111	18	234	3,058

OPI Gems Database, Number of Homeless Children/Youth Enrolled in Public Schools

The OPI data only applies to children enrolled in public schools. Virtually all pre-kindergarten enrolled students are enrolled because they have an identified special need, so it represents a much smaller portion of the total child population than kindergarten, so kindergarten is included as a rough proxy of the likely number of children how are homeless in a near age cohort. There are no clear trends in homelessness at the Yellowstone County level or in Montana, though in Montana, there is some indication that the total number of homeless children enrolled in school is trending toward an increase. Carbon County data are masked, so total numbers of students in all grades in all public schools in Carbon County is under 10.

Given the data from kindergarten and overall for enrolled public-school students in Yellowstone County, it is likely that the number of young children who experience homelessness over the course of a year is higher than what the HUD snapshot captures.

Head Start had 17 homeless children in its January, 2018 snapshot data of students enrolled in the Explorers Academy.

2.5 CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Identifying children with disabilities is important since prompt diagnosis, treatment and tailored educational approaches help children reach their full potential.

Table 2-10: Children with Identified Disabilities					
Location	Total Children Under 5	Total Children Under 5 with Disabilities Identified	Estimated Percent of Children < 5 with Disabilities	Children < 5 with Hearing Difficulties	Children <5 with Visual Difficulties
Carbon County	456	7	1.5%	2 (+/-4)	5 (+/-8)
Yellowstone County	9,934	*	2.4%	241 (+/118)	196 (+/-112)

US Census, 2011-2015

Census reports only hearing and visual disabilities separately for children under 5. Other disabilities that Census tracks do not apply to children this young, such as ability to live independently. It also does not track most disabilities that the Office of Public Instruction tracks.

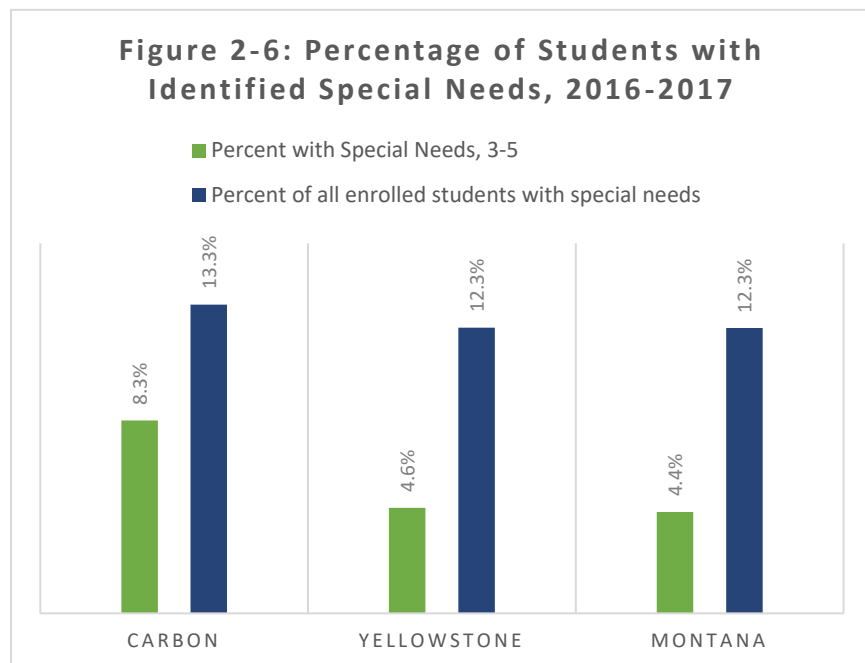
The Office of Public Instruction and local school districts track a much broader array of special needs and serves children ages 3-21.

Table 2-11: Children 3-5 with Identified Special Needs Receiving Public Services				
Location	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017
Carbon County	0	12	10	18
Yellowstone County	264	242	288	293
Montana	1,596	1,694	1,592	1,694

OPI, Gems Database, retrieved 9/2017 and 1/2018

The Office of Public Instruction does report special needs by type, but only across all age groups from 3-21 (although both counties do not report any services for ages 19-21). Carbon County has a small number of children,

so the types of special needs reported could be quite variable from year to year.



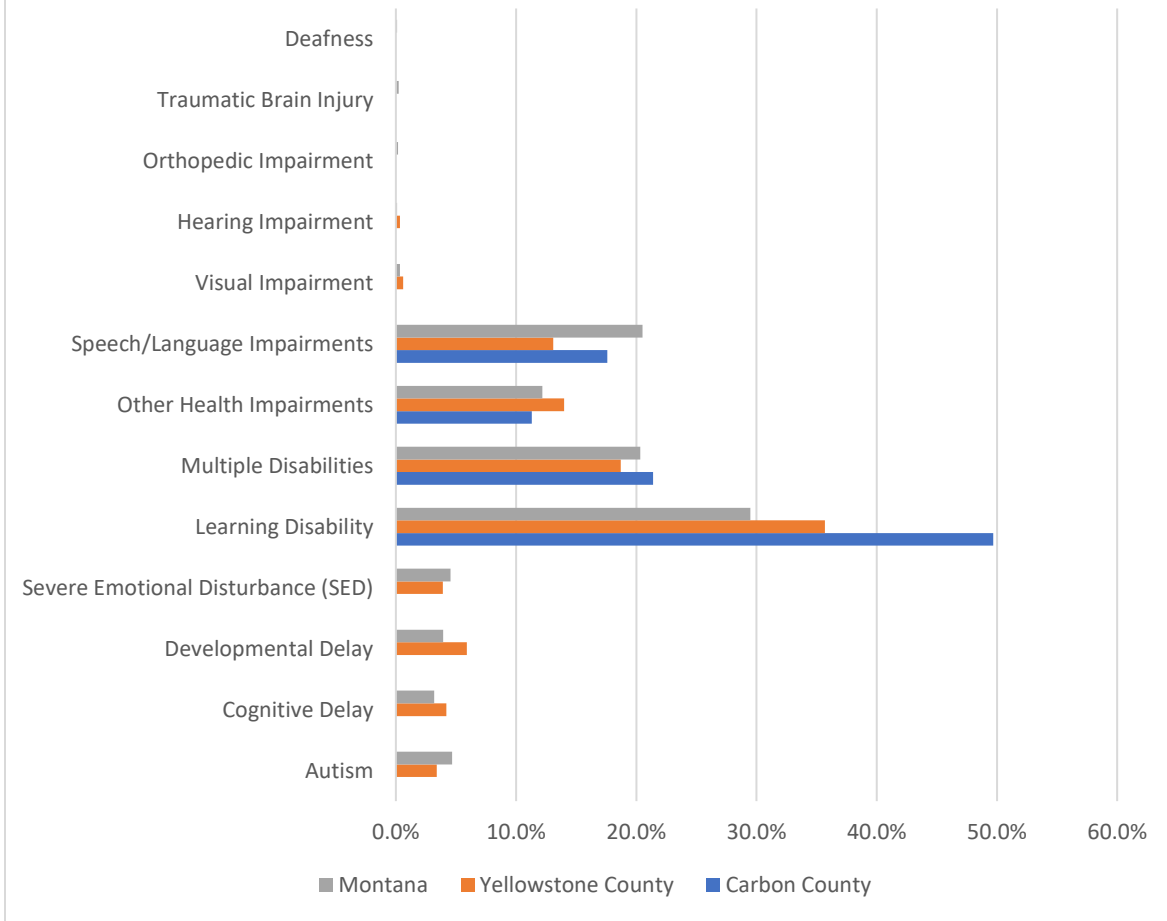
Children who experience learning disabilities were the largest proportion of students in both counties. This is followed by cognitive delays, developmental delays and other health impairments. This pattern is the likeliest distribution for children ages 3-5, but information to verify that is not currently available.

Derived from OPI GEMS Data, 2016-2017 and US Census population estimate, ACS 2012-2016

The percentage of children with special needs identified in the three to five age range is lower than the percentages in school districts overall.

Identifying children who have special needs and to ensure that needed services are needed is a Head Start priority. Data from the January, 2018 indicate that Head Start, Inc. had identified and was serving 56 children, 16% of preschool students whose status was recorded.

Figure 2-7: Percentage of Children Served by Dominant Disability (3-21), 2016-2017



OPI Gems Database. In the data, results are masked if the total children served is less than 10, to avoid identification.

3.0 COMMUNITY SERVICES TO SERVE YOUNG FAMILY NEEDS

3.1 OVERVIEW OF FAMILY NEEDS AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

Billings, as the largest community in Montana, has significant services for families. The Head Start service area includes a fairly large geographic area and includes rural areas and small, relatively isolated towns. For instance, Red Lodge is 59 driving miles from Billings. (Google Maps) Even in Yellowstone County, it is possible to drive more than 70 miles from northeast Yellowstone County to Billings. These distances plus seasonal problems with weather mean that the far-flung population can experience isolation and geographic difficulty in reaching services.

This section characterizes challenges, opportunities and service use within the Head Start, Inc. service area. Because Billings is very large compared to all populations outside of the Billings metro area, one real challenge is that many services are located or centered in that area, but are used by the entire service area.

3.2 CHILD CARE AND PRESCHOOL STATUS AND SERVICES

Besides Head Start, there are many fee-for-service options available for child care and preschool. Only licensed care facilities are eligible to use Best Beginnings scholarships.

3.2.1 ESTIMATES OF CHILD CARE AND PRESCHOOL ENROLLMENT

In Carbon County, the Bridger-Fromberg area lost 18 slots of children care since 2015, but the school is currently serving 18 with its free morning preschool (This is two students above their ideal capacity.), and has replaced the spots that Head Start used to provide at sites in Joliet and Red Lodge. Roberts has also increased its slots from 6 to 12. The Bridger-Fromberg area is well served for preschool, but since it ends at 11am, there is not licensed child care that can accommodate more hours. Yellowstone, licensed slots have increased by 101 since 2015. Billings, Laurel, Worden, and Shepherd gained slots. Huntley lost 6 slots.

In Carbon County, there are licensed slots that could serve about 21% of children ages zero to five. There are licensed slots that could serve 47% of children ages zero to five In Yellowstone County. In reality, the licensed slots are used by a wider age, but it is a reasonable approximation of the child care capacity compared to the number of young children. The reason for this disparity is not completely clear, but it does appear that child care facilities have more ability to offer services in Billings than in more rural areas, perhaps because of the relative density of the population.

Table 3-1: Total Licensed Child Care Slots and Facilities by Location, 2017		
Location	Total Registered Slots	Number of Facilities
Carbon County	84	4
Bridger	0	0
Fromberg	0	0
Joliet	12	1
Red Lodge	60	2
Roberts	12	1
Yellowstone County	3,678	187
Ballantine	18	2
Billings, Total	3,412	169
Billings, 59501	1,463	63
Billings, 59502	1,218	64
Billings, 59505	713	40
Billings, 59506	18	2
Huntley	12	1
Laurel	218	11
Shepherd	58	2
Worden	18	2

DPHHS, Child Care Inspection/Licensing Reports, December 2017

Programs are working on innovative ways to increase access to high quality preschool. The STARS Preschool initiative is the first state funded program in Montana. (Office of the Governor Steve Bullock, 2017) Four expansions were possible in Yellowstone and Carbon counties. These are:

- Head Start, Inc., Billings Montana
- Lockwood School District, Lockwood, MT
- Beartooth Children's Center, Red Lodge, MT
- Kountry Kare, Shepherd, MT

These four expansions account for a portion of the expansion of licensed child care facilities noted in the previous table and serve preschool children.

Bridger Public School in Carbon County currently offers free preschool primarily to four-year old children, but also serves some three-year old children and some from Fromberg as space allows. Since there is no licensed child care in that community, this program is particularly helpful, but only offers limited hours in the morning.

3.2.2 CHILD CARE COSTS AND BEST BEGINNINGS SCHOLARSHIPS

Child care can be a significant portion of a family's income.

The *Best Beginnings Childcare Scholarship* program does offer a sliding scale co-payment program for eligible parents that can be used to reimburse licensed childcare and preschool programs. In

In 2016, the reimbursement rates for both Carbon and Yellowstone Counties was established as:

Table 3-2: Region 7.2 – South East Best Beginnings Rates for Scholarships, 2016		
Big Horn, Carbon, Stillwater, Sweet Grass, Treasure and Yellowstone Counties		
Type of Facility	Child – Hourly	Child - Daily
LCP	\$4.03	\$19.95
Family	\$5.31	\$26.53
Group	\$5.41	\$27.59
Center	\$5.73	\$30.56

DPHHS. Note: Child is defined as 2 or older.

These figures are calculated based on a market survey and set at the 75th percentile of child care charges, by type. They are calculated for a region. Both Carbon and Yellowstone counties are in Region 7.2. Parents need to meet several work or school requirements pay a co-payment determined by a sliding scale. Income eligibility tops out at 150% of the FPL. Scholarships are only available for facilities that are licensed by the State of Montana. Some preschools opt out of licensure and so are not eligible for scholarship programs.

Cost of full-time child care in Montana averaged \$7,900/year for a four-year old child in 2014. (Office of the Governor Steve Bullock) Expenditures of less than 10% of annual income on child care is considered affordable by the US Department of Health and Human services. (Montana Budget and Policy Center, September 2016) By that measure, a family with one child in care would have to make more than \$79,000/year for full-time child care. This household income figure is substantially above the poverty level.

Best Beginnings Scholarships are available to some families, only 22% of those eligible for the scholarships received them in Yellowstone County and 16% of those who are income eligible received them in the region that included Carbon County. (Montana Budget and Policy Center, 2016) These are the two areas with the highest use of the scholarships in Montana, yet the overall proportion is still small.

The scholarship program does not fully reflect the underlying racial and ethnic diversity either. The Center for Law and Social Policy found that the Best Beginnings scholarship program serves 19% of eligible white children, 13% of eligible American Indian children and 10% of eligible Hispanic/Latino children in Montana between 2010-2014. (Montana Budget and Policy Center, 2016)

The **Best Beginnings Scholarship** program useful for working families. In Yellowstone and Carbon counties 1,444 children under 5 received Best Beginning scholarships in SFY2017. (DPHHS) This represents scholarships for 12% of total child care slots in Carbon County and 39% of slots in Yellowstone County.

3.2.3 SURVEY RESULTS ON CHILD CARE AND EARLY EDUCATION SERVICES

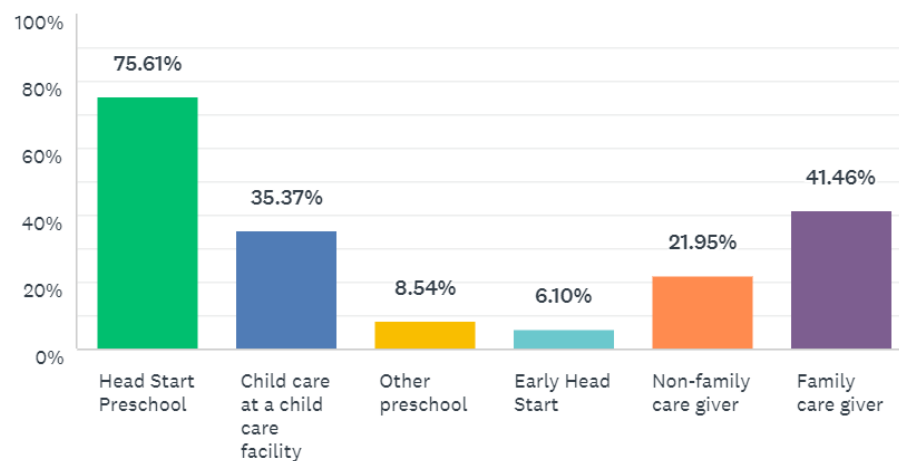
Child care and early education was considered important by Head Start staff, community partners and Head Start families.

Families value the preschool services provided by Head Start. 90% of respondents said that the preschool services provided were “very useful.” Of all services Head Start offers, this was the highest rated (Appendix B)

Families had used a variety of care and early education in the last year.

Figure 3-1: Preschool and child care services used in the last year by Head Start Families

Answered: 82 Skipped: 0



In the last year (some interpreted it as the previous year), most families had used one or more forms of early education and child care services. Family member care was the second most popular non-parental caregiver, followed by child care as a facility. Many used more than one option for child care.

Head Start staff and community partners identified that child care and early education were top community assets (Appendix A), a prevalent community problem and community partners identified child care services as a top gap in Yellowstone County.

Community Asset

- Early Head Start/Head Start and other quality preschool programs were seen as an aid to families with young children.
- Best Beginnings scholarships are a significant help to those who qualify

Useful and Effectively Provided Services

- Head Start staff identified early education opportunities as current useful services in both counties, and community partners identified this as useful services in Yellowstone county.

- Available child care was identified as a top useful service in Yellowstone County by community partners and in Carbon County by Head Start staff.

Prevalent Community Problem

- Finding accessing and affording quality child care and early education is seen as an ongoing problem for income eligible families.
- Eligibility issues limit use of Best Beginnings scholarships

Service Gap

- Partner responses identified this as a gap in Yellowstone County. It was one of four service gaps identified in Carbon County, though the survey response size was so small on this question, it isn't possible to talk about relative importance of this gap. However, given that there are a lower percentage of licensed slots compared to children under five, it is likely that this is a service gap in Carbon County too.

Access to Child Care and Preschool Services

All survey respondents were asked about access to child care and preschool services and professionals were asked about their own level of knowledge about what community services were available in this area.

- 90% of Head Start families thought preschool services were very useful. 21% thought Head Start provided child care services were very useful and 66% reported they had not used child care services.
- Child care was identified as an accessible service by 38% of community partners. 69% identified service capacity as a barrier and another 62% thought access was limited by income. In contrast, only 14% thought early education was an accessible service. 79% thought it was limited by income and 57% thought service capacity was a barrier.
- Child care was identified as an accessible service by 14% of Head Start staff respondents. 52% thought access was limited by income and 48% thought both eligibility and service capacity limited access. In the area of early education, 17% thought this was an accessible service.

Head Start staff and community partners were also asked to assess their knowledge level of these services. 68% of Head Start staff said they know a moderate amount to were expert in child care services available in the community. For early education, 83% rated their knowledge of community early education services as moderate to expert. 88% of community partners had moderate to expert knowledge of child care services and early education services. When asked specifically about familiarity with Head Start, 76% had a moderate or high familiarity with the program.

Conclusions

There are a variety of perspectives on services in this area, and it appears that family circumstances, convenient capacity, cost and eligibility drive part of the differences seen in the survey data.

Head Start data on enrollment suggests that there is not enough free quality preschool to meet demand. In its January 2018 snapshot, 175 eligible children had either completed applications on the wait list, even though the next full enrollment would not occur until the following fall. For Head Start preschool, it does appear that Carbon County residents access the service in very low numbers, with no enrollees from the southern half of that county.

In more rural areas, provision of preschool services is relatively limited, with fewer facilities compared to the population.

3.3 TRANSPORTATION STATUS AND SERVICES

Montana is a rural state. Despite the fact that Yellowstone County has about 15% of the total population in the state, large areas are quite rural. Even in the largest urban area in the state, distances are often greater than one to two miles between destinations and are not easily accessible by walking.

Services for transportation assistance are relatively scarce for families with young children. The City of Billings MET Transport is the public transportation option. It services Billings, but gaps include limited hours and routes, including no service to Lockwood. HRDC does have a “Wheels to Work” program that offers help with bus passes, gas cards and repairs to personal vehicles. For some Head Start families, the bus offers rides to and from the sites.

Because of the low-density population and spread out nature of the geographic service area, transportation ownership and use are high. Travel time to work varies greatly, and it tracked from less than 10 minutes to over 60 minutes. In Carbon County, mean commute time is 27.7 minutes. In Yellowstone County, mean commute time is 19.2 minutes for workers 16 and over. (US Census)

Overall, there are very few working individuals without any access to a vehicle. Access to two or more vehicles is the norm for a very large majority of workers in both Carbon and Yellowstone Counties. Among people with incomes of less than 100% of FPL or 100-149% FPL, driving alone is still the largest proportion of transportation, suggesting that the majority of people working have at least some access to vehicles.

Table 3-3: Workers Transportation Modes by Income Levels				
	Carbon County		Yellowstone County	
	Estimate	Margin of Error	Estimate	Margin of Error
Total:	5,026	+/-188	77,313	+/-873
Below 100 percent of the poverty level	249	+/-75	4,584	+/-462
100 to 149 percent of the poverty level	411	+/-101	5,280	+/-591
Car, truck, or van - drove alone:	3,190	+/-221	62,462	+/-1,051
Below 100 percent of the poverty level	153	+/-65	3,044	+/-427
100 to 149 percent of the poverty level	229	+/-74	3,975	+/-488
Car, truck, or van - carpooled:	733	+/-140	8,157	+/-769
Below 100 percent of the poverty level	54	+/-33	920	+/-265
100 to 149 percent of the poverty level	76	+/-62	734	+/-224
Public transportation (excluding taxicab):	75	+/-38	756	+/-165
Below 100 percent of the poverty level	4	+/-6	117	+/-81
100 to 149 percent of the poverty level	30	+/-30	70	+/-63
Walked:	429	+/-97	2,121	+/-442
Below 100 percent of the poverty level	32	+/-24	307	+/-127
100 to 149 percent of the poverty level	24	+/-20	309	+/-200
Taxicab, motorcycle, bicycle, or other means:	150	+/-49	1,131	+/-235
Below 100 percent of the poverty level	0	+/-16	93	+/-74
100 to 149 percent of the poverty level	23	+/-21	90	+/-52
Worked at home:	449	+/-109	2,686	+/-352
Below 100 percent of the poverty level	6	+/-6	103	+/-62
100 to 149 percent of the poverty level	29	+/-21	102	+/-54

US Census, ACS 2011-2015

3.3.1 SURVEY RESULTS ON TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

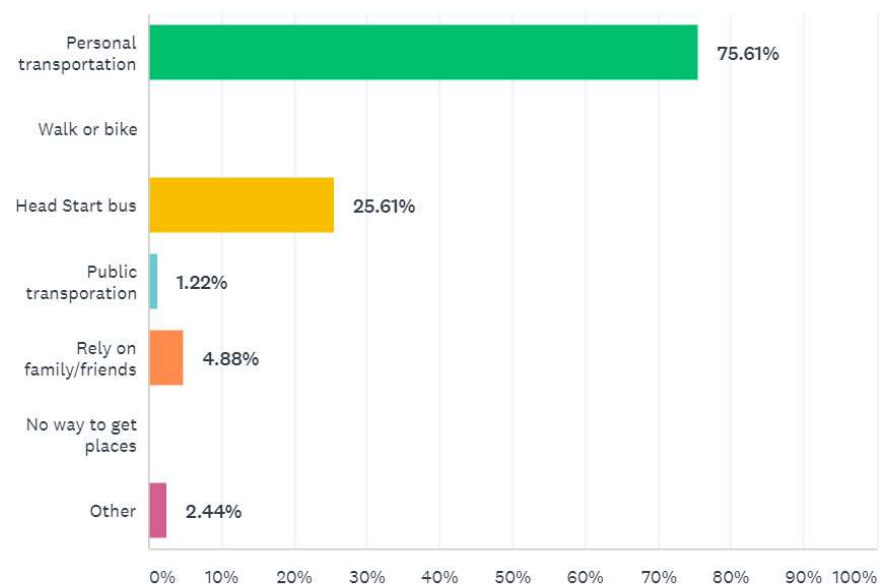
Head Start staff, community partners and Head Start families were asked about access to transportation. Head Start families were also asked about transport to preschool and the value of the bus service.

- Head start staff identified transportation as one of the top gaps in services for young families in Yellowstone County as well as a prevalent community problem.

Head Start families primarily bring their children to preschool and other activities by private vehicle.

Figure 3-2: Head Start Family Transportation Methods to Preschool and Other Activities

Answered: 82 Skipped: 0



Families were asked about ease of getting children to school. Respondents were allowed to check all modes of transportation that applied.

Figure 3-3: Ability to Transport Children to Preschool and other Activities (All responses)

Answered: 81 Skipped: 1

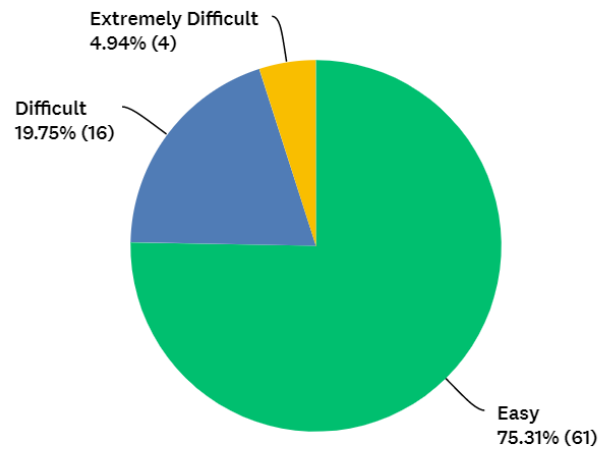
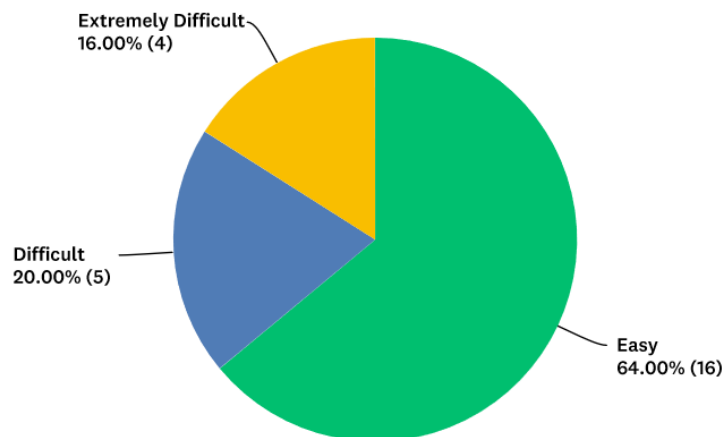


Figure 3-4: Ability to Transport Children to Preschool and other Activities (use other transport)

Answered: 25 Skipped: 1



Of these respondents, 27% also had a personal vehicle they used for transport in addition to other means of transportation. 81% relied on the Head Start bus and the next most common method was to rely on family or friends (15%).

18 people out of 81 responses, 22% of Head Start family survey respondents, do not have access to a personal vehicle to take their children to preschool or other activities. This is only an indicator of the overall need, but is far higher than the percentages of non-personal vehicle use for work among those in poverty. One respondent even indicated that they walk or borrow a vehicle because the family only has one car, presumably being used for work.

Head Start bus use is valued by families. 48% said that the Head Start bus made the Head Start location more convenient and 46% said that this transport was very useful for their families, behind only the preschool services and referrals in that category. When asked about accessing community transportation services, 21% indicated that they were OK or easy to use.

3.4 PHYSICAL HEALTH STATUS AND SERVICES

3.4.1 MEDICAL SERVICES AND HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE

Physical health, medical care, and health insurance present a mixed picture in the Head Start service area. Billings is the largest city in Montana and has two excellent hospitals, Riverstone Health, and several excellent medical and medical centers. Most of these services either serve Carbon county with periodic clinics, clinics like Beartooth Billings Clinic or through visits to Billings for medical treatment. Though one professional did respond in the survey that more specialists in some areas would be helpful, Billings is better served for medical care than anywhere else in Montana. For Carbon County, proximity, plus outreach services are available.

Insurance coverage is also an issue for some people in the region. The 2016-2017 Community Health Needs Report for Yellowstone County found that 15% of those aged 18-64 polled with incomes under 200% of the FPL lacked insurance. (PRC, Inc.) For children, free to low cost health care coverage is available through Healthy Kids Montana (CHIP) and Montana Medicaid. In Yellowstone County, 1,346 children under five received CHIP medical health insurance benefits and 89 children in Carbon County received them.

In 2016, the Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation estimate that essentially all children in Montana were insured, with 46% covered by some form of Medicaid and 5% covered by other public sources, comparing favorably to a 5% uninsured rate in the United States as a whole. However, Montana's rate of Medicaid program use is 8% higher than the national average of 38% and only four states have a higher percentage of children who are insured through this source. This reliance on these sources does make a large proportion of Montana's children insurance potentially vulnerable to changes in federal funding.

3.4.2 INDICATORS OF PHYSICAL HEALTH

Overall indicators of physical health are mixed in Yellowstone County. The 2016-2017 Community Needs Report found that low income (defined as less than 200%) has far higher rates of health risks, including overall "fair/poor health" at a rate of 24.1% compared to 9.3% for survey respondents who had incomes over 200%. For all survey respondents, 5% had difficulty getting to medical services, higher than the national rate of 3.8% For children, the report found that 84.1% had been to a routine physical in the past year 88.1% of children ages 2 to 17 had been to a dentist in the past year, similar to national levels

Maternal, prenatal, infant indicators are also mixed. While some factors, like prenatal care and the number of insured children are fairly good, the number of low birthweight babies and the infant death rate continues to be a concern. Though Head Start children are three or four, these early indicators of health do continue to have impacts as children age.

Table 3-4: Maternal, Infant and Child Health Factors				
Health Factors	Yellowstone County	Carbon County	Montana	US
Number of births**	5,955	234	35,881	
% No Prenatal Care in First Trimester*	22.4	24.0	26.7	22.1
% Low Birthweight Births*	8.0	+ (not enough occurrences)	7.4	8.0
Infant Death Rate*	6.8	--	5.8	5.9
Any insurance at birth**	95.8	+ (not enough occurrences)	92.3	--
Receiving WIC**	1,727 (29%)	47 (20%)	34.6	--
Teen birth rate per 1,000 females age 15-19 yrs., 2009-2013**	34.7	16.1	32.0	--
% Children on WIC (2-5 yrs. of age) overweight or obese+	26.8	20.0	--	--
WIC Population -Initiate breastfeeding+	85.1	+ (not enough occurrences)	84.7	--

*2016-2017 Community Health Needs Report, Yellowstone County

**DPHHS, Community Health Profiles, 2015, from Teen Birth Report, 2009-2013

+DPHHS, Community Health Profiles, 2015, from WIC Program in Family and Community Health Bureau

3.4.3 SURVEY RESULTS ON MEDICAL AND PHYSICAL HEALTH

Behavioral health risks are a concern for medical health services as well. These are discussed in section 3.7 for substance abuse and addiction and in section 3.8 on nutrition, food and physical activity factors.

Survey responses from the Head Start staff, community partners and Head Start families all show some concern in this area, but also signs this is an area with significant assets.

Useful and Effective Services

- Community partners rated medical services as one of their top identified useful and effective services in Yellowstone County and Head Start staff identified is as one of the top useful and effective services in Carbon County.

Access to Medical Services Including Insurance

Families and professionals were asked their opinions on ease of access. Professionals were also asked to identify barriers to access.

- 32% of families said they had an easy time accessing physical health services. However, 41% reported they did not use this service. Since only 7 Head Start children were not yet insured in the November 2017, it appears that many families do not view insurance in this category. However, if this percentage is accurate for other services, it suggests many Head Start children are not getting full physical health services.
- 48% of Head Start staff though eligibility was a barrier to access in the area of physical health services and 36% thought income was a barrier. 24% responded that these services were accessible.
- Community partners also identified eligibility (43%) and income (43%) as the two biggest barriers to gaining access to physical health services. 21% thought the services were accessible.

3.5 MENTAL HEALTH STATUS AND SERVICES

Mental health and mental health services have both been identified frequently as a major concern in the area. Yellowstone County has more detailed data available than for Carbon County (which is part of the South-Central region), but the basic picture that emerges is that depression and suicide are major concerns for the area. Mental health was identified as a major problem by 73.4% of the key informants in the Community Health Needs Report, the number one most identified topic. (PRC, Inc.)

3.5.1 MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Mental health services exist in Billings and to a much lesser extent in Carbon County. These range from crisis to ongoing service needs and services exist that can serve children and adults. However, this area was identified as a critical service need in the Head Start staff and community partner surveys and a top service gap in both counties by Head Start staff.

Services for children and families include the Center for Children and Families, AWARE, and Youth Dynamics as well as private practices. Adult mental health services are offered through a variety of organizations including Riverstone Health, hospitals, Billings Clinic, Center for Children and Families, the Mental Health Center and a variety of private practitioners. For adults it is often offered at facilities that also offer services to address substance abuse and addiction. Children who receive Medicaid services can access mental health services. In SFY2017, 36 claims for children under 5 in Carbon County and 872 children in Yellowstone county were received. This is a higher proportion of claims that children who receive services for special needs through public schools, so it appears that at least a portion of needs is being met for young children in the area of mental health services.

However, despite the concentration of some mental health services, addressing a lack of mental health treatment options, resources and personnel was identified as a high priority (PRC, Inc.) Due to budget cuts at the Montana, caseworkers for mental health have been cut, reducing this type of service.

3.5.2 INDICATORS OF MENTAL HEALTH

Depression and suicide are both major concerns in Yellowstone County. For people identified with low incomes, the rate was even higher with 22.4% reporting “fair/poor” mental health and 44.3% reporting symptoms of depression. (Community Health Needs Report, 2017).

Table 3-5: Mental Health and Mental Disorders				
Mental Health Factor	Yellowstone County	Carbon County	Montana	US
% "Fair/Poor Mental Health	13.4%	17.6 (For S Central region, BRFSS)	15.4 (BRFSS)	15.5%
% Diagnosed Depression	25.3%	20.4%	19%	
% Symptoms of Chronic Depression (2+ years)	31.0	21.1 (S Central region, BRFSS)	29.9	
Suicide (Age-adjusted Death Rate)	22.8	23.4 (Carbon Co.)	23.4	12.7
% Ever sought Help for Mental Health	35.5		27.4	
% Unable to Get Mental Health Services in Past Year	3.5		4.4	
% Typical Day is "Extremely/Very" Stressful	11.7		11.7	

PRC, Inc.; BRFSS for South Central Montana

3.5.3 SURVEY RESULTS FOR MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Head Start staff and community partners were asked to identify prevalent problems, critical services, assets and service gaps. They also identified some additional resources need for families with young children.

Head Start staff, community partners and Head Start families were asked about access questions surrounding mental health services.

- Community partners identified mental health as one of their top community problems for the area for young children and their families
- Head Start staff identified mental health services as one of their top service gaps in both Yellowstone and Carbon counties
- Both groups identified mental health services as a critical service need for Head Start eligible families and children

Access to mental health services: Barriers to both children and adult mental services were seen as significant. (Appendices A and B)

- 60% of community partners identified service capacity as a barrier for children's services and 57% thought it was also a barrier for adult mental health services. Eligibility was seen as an access barrier by 43% of respondents for adult services and by 47% for children's services. Income was seen as a barrier for adult services by 64% of community partners and by 40% for children's services. Geography was seen as a barrier for both adult (42%) and children's (40%) of mental health services.
- Head Start staff also saw eligibility (51% on children's services, 40% on adult services) service capacity (46% for children's services, 40% for adult services), and income (39% for children's services, 43% for adult services)

Fewer Head Start staff saw geography as a barrier, with 15% identifying it for children’s mental health services and 13% for adult services.

- 59% of Head Start families have not used adult mental health services and 46% have not used children’s mental health services. This isn’t a surprise, since a minority of respondents on community surveys require these types of health services. Among those who have used these services, 47% found accessing children’s mental health services easy and 32% found accessing adult mental health services easy. Very few could not access mental health services at all.

Ideas for additional resources needed to improve mental health services and meet the needs of Head Start eligible families and children are:

- 1) More services and capacity with decreased wait times
- 2) More professional training and educational opportunities on trauma

3.6 SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND ADDICTION STATUS AND SERVICES

Substance abuse was identified as a major health problem in Yellowstone County by 68.8% of key informants, second only behind mental health. (PRC, Inc., 2017) Drug and alcohol use have been a factor in child removal to foster care in 76.6% of open cases in the July 10, 2017 snapshot for the region that included both Carbon and Yellowstone counties. (DPHHS, 2017)

3.6.1 SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND ADDICTION SERVICES

Substance abuse and addiction treatment services exist in the area, often in conjunction with mental health services. Both residential and outpatient options exist in Billings, including Rimrock Foundation, Riverstone Health St. Vincent Healthcare, Community Crisis Center, the Mental Health Center and a range of private and nonprofit services. However, given the scope of the problem identified, it does appear that capacity and access may be difficulties in finding and using services, as well as the stigma often related to this need.

3.6.2 SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND ADDICTION INDICATORS

Table 3-6: Percent Reported Substance Use Behaviors				
Behavioral Risk Factors	Yellowstone County	South Central Region	Montana	US
Current Smoker*	19.6	19.4 (S Central Region, BRFSS)	19.0	19.0
Heavy Drinking*	7.5 (S Central, BRFSS)	7.5 (S Central, BRFSS)	7.7	6.2
Binge Drinking*	18.8 (S Central, BRFSS)	18.8 (S Central, BRFSS)	20.8	16.8
Illicit Substance Abuse+	1			3.0
Affected by Substance Abuse+	45			32.4

*DPHHS BRFSS Reports, 2013

**South Central Montana is one of the regions used in the behavioral health reporting. Both Carbon and Yellowstone counties are included in this region.

+PRC, Inc., 2017

While smoking overall in the population is the same as the national median, smoking is significantly higher among American Indians/Alaska Native residents (38.3%) and, in the Yellowstone County Health Needs Report poll, among people whose income is below 200% of the FPL, with reported at 36.8% of respondents reporting smoking.

Binge drinking is significantly higher in adults 35 years of age or younger. This age group is also the most likely to have children below the age of 5. (DPPHS BRFSS Report)

While only 1% of Yellowstone County residents reported using an illicit substance in the last month, 45.5% of respondents reported being affected by substance abuse (PRC, Inc.).

Substance use (both drugs and alcohol) were identified as an indicator in the 76.6% of all foster care removals in the July 10, 2017 snapshot for the region both Carbon and Yellowstone County are in, the second highest incidence rate in Montana regions, behind eastern Montana (DPHHS).

3.6.3 SURVEY RESULTS ON SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND ADDICTION SERVICES

Head Start staff, community partners were asked to identify community challenges and assets as well as rate accessibility to services addressing substance abuse and addiction for Head Start eligible families with young children. Head Start parents were asked about access to these services, if needed.

- Both Head Start staff and community partners identified addiction and substance abuse as a prevalent community problem more than any other topic except for poverty related issues
- Community partners identified it as one of the top critical service needs for Head Start eligible families and children. It was also identified as a top service gap by community partners.

A significant number of respondents identified barriers to **accessibility for addiction and substance abuse services**.

- Only 15% of Head Start staff were thought services in this area were accessible. 44% identified service capacity as a barrier, and 44% identified income and eligibility as barriers.
- Among community partner respondents, 7% thought these services were accessible, while 50% saw barriers in service capacity, 57% saw eligibility barriers, and 43% saw income barriers.
- There was a bit of a split in opinion on geography as a barrier to access: 36% of community partner respondents saw it is a barrier while 17% of Head Start staff identified geography as a barrier.
- 78% of families had not used services in this area. Of those that had, 7 of 17 had found access easy, and 5 had found access OK.

Suggestions for additional resources in this area were:

- 1) More services
- 2) Better access and more treatment services specifically for parents.

3.7 NUTRITION AND FOOD STATUS AND SERVICES

Adequate food and nutrition are critical for child development. Because of this status, there has been significant sustained interest in programs promoting nutrition assistance including SNAP and WIC.

3.7.1 NUTRITION AND FOOD SERVICES

Several food and nutrition assistance services exist in both communities. WIC offers services and clinics in both Carbon and Yellowstone counties. SNAP is available for eligible families in both counties, though the closure of the Office of Public Assistance office in Red Lodge in late 2017 has probably made it more difficult to access this service, though it too early to tell.

For SFY2017, 83 households with children under 5 received SNAP benefits in Carbon County and 2,848 of households with children under 5 received them in Yellowstone County.

Food Banks and/or free meal opportunities are available in locations in Billings, Laurel, Red Lodge, Joliet and Bridger. These help with emergency and sporadic food insecurity. In child care settings, the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) offers healthy food for children during the day.

3.7.2 NUTRITION AND FOOD INDICATORS

There are several indications that food insecurity continues to be a problem. Feeding America (Table 3-X) estimated that 16.2% of children in Yellowstone County and 17.7% of children in Carbon County were food insecure. (Feeding America, 2017)

It is likely that the true figure here is higher for children under five than the figure presented in table 3-8, since overall poverty rates for children under the age of five are higher than the poverty rates for all children. If all factors were held constant, there would be about 18 food insecure children under five in Carbon County and about 1,618 children under 5 in Yellowstone county.

Table 3-7: Child Food Insecurity, 2015						
County	Child Food Insecurity Rate	Population under 18 years old ¹	Estimated number food insecure children	Average cost of a meal	Food insecure children likely income-eligible for federal nutrition assistance	Food insecure children likely not income-eligible for federal nutrition assistance
Carbon County	17.7%	1,935	340	\$2.98	59%	41%
Yellowstone County	16.2%	36,248	5,880	\$2.94	62%	38%
Montana	18.8%	226,227	42,480	\$2.86	60%	40%
United States	17.9%	73,285,000	13,118,000	\$2.94	80%	20%

Source: Feeding America, 2017

There is a trend in overall reduction in food insecurity since the great recession. Feeding America reports that in 2015, an estimated 13.4% of all individuals were food insecure, down from 15.4% in 2014 and 16.6% in 2009.

(Note these figures are for all individuals. The percent of children facing food insecurity is typically higher than the population as a whole.) (Feeding America, 2017)

The WIC program offers services and clinics in both Carbon and Yellowstone counties.

Table 3-8: WIC Enrollment, Average Sept, Oct, and Nov 2017			
	Women	Children 1-5	Infants
Yellowstone County	667	1,482	780
Billings	650	1,414	756
Laurel	17	68	24
Carbon County	+	16	+

Source: Riverstone Health, December, 2017. + = Masked, less than 10 reported.

Significant numbers of families benefit from this program, but only a minority of those who qualify for WIC services actually access them.

In addition to service use that directly affect food insecurity, several behavioral and environmental factors can affect the amount and quality of food for a family. The Community Health Needs Report (PRC, Inc, 2017) polled people and found that only 30.8% eat five or more servings of fruit and vegetables a day and 23.3% had a “very/somewhat” difficult time accessing affordable fresh fruit and vegetables. Food insecurity overall was significant for people who had incomes that were below 200% of the FPL. 34.1% in that group reported food insecurity.

Table 3-9: Nutrition Factors			
Nutrition	Yellowstone County	Montana	U.S.
Eat 5 or more servings of fruit and vegetables/day	30.8%	--	27.4
% Population with low food access	23.8	--	21.9
% Report “very/somewhat” difficult to access affordable fresh fruit and vegetables	23.3	26.9	23.6
% Report 7 or more sugar sweetened beverages/week	29.8	--	30.2
% Report food insecurity	16.9	--	25.9
% Children (age 2-17) Physically Active 1+ Hours/day	70.8	--	47.9
% Children (2-17) 3+ Hours/Day Total Screen Time	21.7	--	--

Source: PRC, Inc, 2017

3.7.3 SURVEY RESULTS ON NUTRITION AND FOOD NEEDS AND SERVICES

Head Start staff, community partners identified issues related to nutrition and food. These professionals and Head Start families all identified issues with access to nutrition and food services. Head Start families also identified barriers to being able to find, prepare and eat nutritious meals. (Appendices A and B)

- Both Head Start staff and community partners saw food and nutrition services as one of the top critical services for Head Start families
- Head Start staff identified food and nutrition services as one of the top areas with effectively provided services in Yellowstone County

Access to nutrition and food services:

- Only 25% of Head Start staff thought nutrition and food assistance services were accessible. 45% identified income barriers and 48% identified eligibility. 30% thought service capacity was a barrier and 20% identified the barrier of geography.
- 43% of community partners thought nutrition and food assistance services were accessible. However, 57% thought eligibility was a barrier and 50% thought service capacity was an issue. 43% thought geography was a barrier and 36% thought income was an issue.
- 46% of Head Start families reported that they had not used nutrition and food assistance services. That is a lot, since virtually everyone enrolled in Head Start qualifies for both SNAP and WIC services. It does correlate to the WIC data in that it looks like a substantial number of families that qualify for services in this area do not use them.
- Among families that have used nutrition and food services 55% found access easy and another 31% found access OK.

Head Start families were asked which of several factors made it more difficult to prepare and eat healthy food with their families (Appendix B has the full list). No area was widely identified as moderately or very difficult problems, but in three areas, a majority of Head Start families responded that they experienced at least a little difficulty. These were:

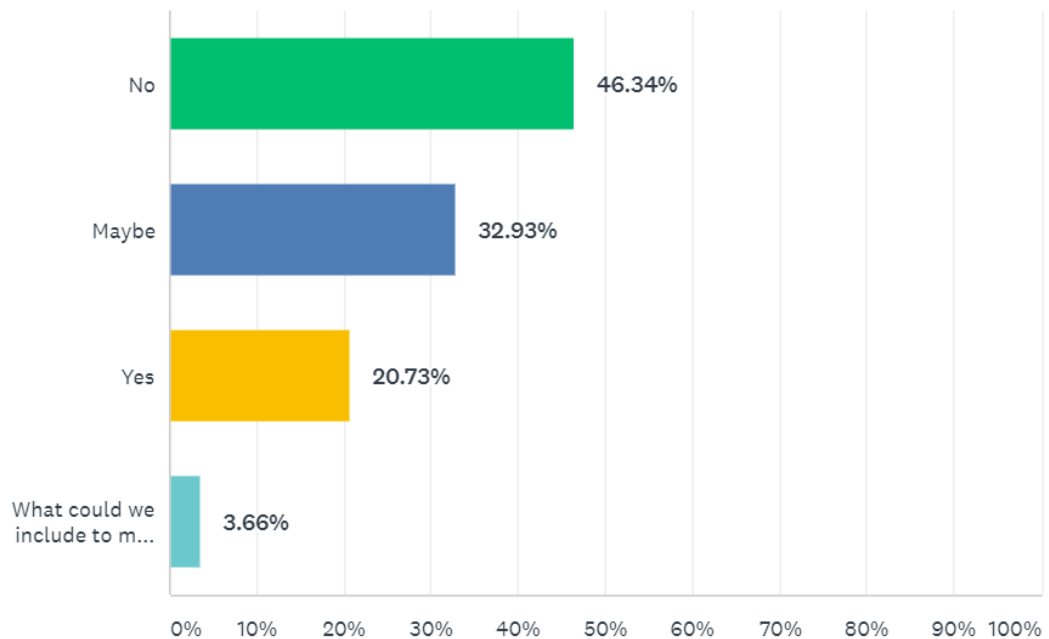
- Being able to afford health foods
- Getting kids and family members to eat healthy foods
- Having enough time to cook and eat healthy food

About 48% of respondents also said they had at least a little difficulty eating enough fruits and vegetables.

Head Start Families were also asked if they'd be interested in opportunities to learn more about nutritious foods. 53% responded as a "maybe" or "yes."

Figure 3-5: Head Start Family Interest in Nutritious Food Opportunities

Answered: 82 Skipped: 0



Suggestions for making such an opportunity more useful were to include recipes, vary the times offered and make it an event.

Suggested improvement for community services in this area were:

- Expansion of existing nutrition and food services
- Restore the backpack program
- Provide more nutritional information to families

3.8 SPECIAL NEEDS STATUS AND SERVICES

Children with special needs are a priority area for Head Start. This area is characterized in section 2.5.

3.8.1 SERVICES FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Children with special needs are served by STEP, Inc if they are under three and through Early Childhood Intervention (Billings) and Yellowstone Co-op services if they are of preschool age. Early Head Start and Head Start also provide identification, direct and referral services. The home visiting program also screens and refers children and community partners do work together to provide screening and/or referral services. Private practitioners also offer services in the area.

3.8.2 SURVEY RESULTS FOR SPECIAL NEEDS SERVICES

Head Start staff and community partners were asked to identify community challenges, assets and services. In every case, special needs were identified by some respondents and an issue, but it was not identified with high frequency. A community partner did identify it as a service gap in Carbon County, but the number of responses

was so low, it was difficult to evaluate whether or not this is a high priority gap. Specific praise for Early Intervention Services and the Yellowstone Co-op were submitted.

Head Start staff, community partners and Head Start families were all asked about access to services for children with special needs.

- 40% of community partners thought service for children with special needs were accessible. However, 60% of respondents thought service capacity was a barrier. 53% thought eligibility was a barrier and 47% identified geography as a barrier for services.
- Only 29% of Head Start staff thought that services for children with special needs were accessible. 53% thought eligibility was a barrier, and 44% through income and service capacity posed a barrier. Among Head Start staff, 17% thought that geography was a barrier.
- 59% of Head Start families had not used services for children with special needs. If anything, this number is high than expected, since the November, 2017 snapshot had only 19% of enrolled Head Start students identified as having special needs. Of parents who had accessed services for children with special needs, 44% had experienced easy access to services and another 31% had OK access.

3.9 HOUSING STATUS AND SERVICES

Housing is a major concern in this community. As outlined in Section 1.4, the cost of living is a little over median US cost of living rates, but rent is not particularly affordable, vacancy rates are low and housing prices for the entire area are high enough to pose affordability problems for any income eligible Head Start families. Among people with incomes below 200% of the FPL in the Community Health Needs Report, 51.3% of respondents expressed worry or stress over paying rent or mortgages in Yellowstone County. (PRC, Inc., 2017)

Homelessness also continues to be a concern in the community. As a priority for Head Start, the need for young children is characterized in Section 2.4. Experts who shared data for this assessment also said that the actual numbers of homeless young children limited, especially in the more rural areas of Yellowstone and Carbon counties.

3.9.1 HOUSING ASSISTANCE SERVICES

HUD housing is the chief affordable housing in the area. However, capacity does not meet demand and this service has a permanent waiting list. HRDC offers housing assistance and financial literacy education designed to help families get and acquire housing.

Homelessness has also been identified as a priority for a significant period of time. A coalition under United Way formed in 2008 to address homelessness. It does appear to have helped partners who provide, crisis and transitional housing assistance work together and with other necessary services, but homelessness continues and may even be rising for young children, but data are sparse.

3.9.2 SURVEY RESULTS ON HOUSING ASSISTANCE SERVICES

Head Start staff and community partners were asked to identify community problems, service gaps, assets and critical services. Both professionals and Head Start families were asked to weigh in on access to housing services.

- Community partners identified housing as one of the most prevalent community problems affecting Head Start eligible families with young children and critical service gap
- Both Head Start staff and community partners identified housing as one of the most critical service needs for Head Start eligible families

Access to Housing Assistance

- Community partners saw major barriers with eligibility (79%), service capacity (64%), income (50%) and geography (36%)
- Head Start staff saw barriers with eligibility (58%), income (45%), and service capacity (48%). Only 13% thought geography was a barrier.
- 59% of Head Start families had not used housing assistance services. Of those who had, 44% found access easy and another 31% found access OK.

Concerns about housing availability, affordability and safety were expressed. A few respondents also pointed out the need for utility assistance.

Suggestions for Improvements

- Expand stock and options of affordable housing
- Provide more streamlined application process for existing housing assistance

3.10 FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE STATUS AND SERVICES

Financial assistance comes in terms of food assistance, housing assistance, health care assistance, child care, and transportation assistance. These forms of assistance are discussed in the sections pertaining to those services.

TAN-F is the program of financial assistance that offers monetary assistance. For those who are eligible, it is very useful. In the November, 2017 Head Start snapshot, 22 families received public assistance.

In Yellowstone and Carbon Counties, 742 households with children under 5 received TANF benefits in SFY2017, with the vast majority residing in Yellowstone County.

In late 2017, the Office of Public Assistance closed its office in Red Lodge as part of state-wide cost-cutting measures. It is not yet clear what kind of barrier to access this may be for Carbon County families, but will post additional difficulties for those with transportation or communications access challenges.

3.10.1 SURVEY RESULTS ON FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE SERVICES

Head Start staff and community partners identified community challenges, assets, critical services and useful services. The professional staff and Head Start families identified level of access to this service.

Financial services by itself was not a top service gap, asset, or critical service. However, Head Start staff identified poverty as a top community problem for Head Start eligible families. Direct financial assistance services are a piece of the services needed to address this community problem.

Access to Financial Assistance

- Only 8% of Head Start staff though access to financial assistance was good. 31% of community partners thought it was good and of the families that had used this service, 31% thought it was easy to access and another 33% thought it was OK to access. 28% thought it was difficult to access and 8% were not able to use this service.

APPENDIX A: HEAD START STAFF AND COMMUNITY PARTNER SURVEY SUMMARIES

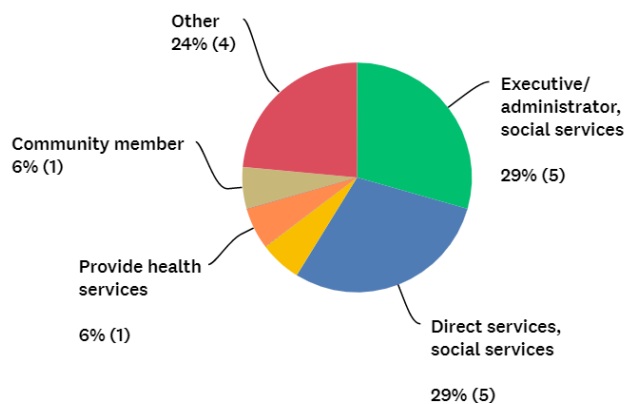
Head Start staff and community partners were asked to answer a survey on community services. Most questions were the same to facilitate comparison between the two groups. 42 Head Start staff answered out of a staff of 115 and 17 of 54 invited community partners answered the survey.

For each question below, group of professionals are indicated.

Community Partner Survey Respondent Characteristics

Question 1: What is your primary role in the provision of community services?

Answered: 17 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Executive/ administrator, social services	29%	5
Direct services, social services	29%	5
Local Educational Agency (LEA)	6%	1
Fund community services	0%	0
Provide health services	6%	1
Business	0%	0
Civic group	0%	0
Community member	6%	1
Other	24%	4
TOTAL		17

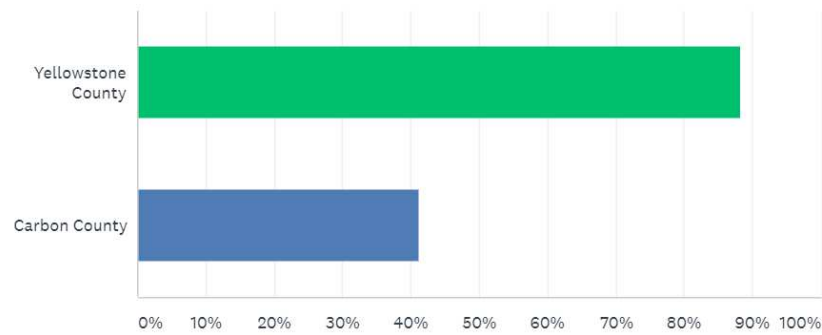
Other responses (categorized to deidentify):

- Family and Legal advocacy (1) CASA
- Early childhood services (1)
- Therapeutic services (1)

- Community and volunteer organization and coordination (1)

Question 2: What counties do you work in or represent? (Check all that apply)

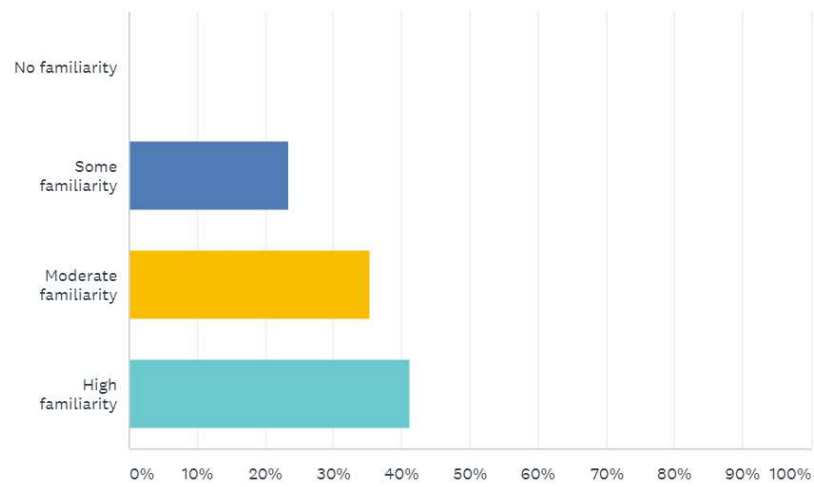
Answered: 17 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
▼ Yellowstone County	88.24%	15
▼ Carbon County	41.18%	7
Total Respondents: 17		

Question 3: How familiar are you with Head Start, Inc. programs and services?

Answered: 17 Skipped: 0

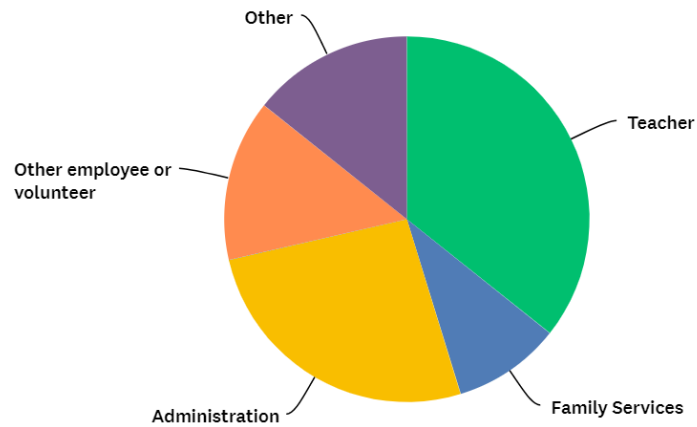


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
No familiarity	0.00%	0
Some familiarity	23.53%	4
Moderate familiarity	35.29%	6
High familiarity	41.18%	7
TOTAL		17

Head Start Staff Survey Respondent Characteristics

Question 1: What is your role within Head Start?

Answered: 42 Skipped: 0



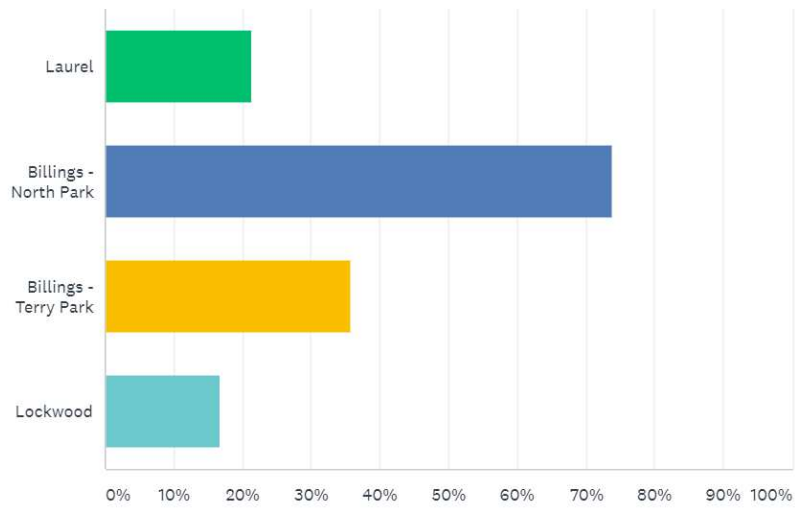
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
▼ Teacher	35.71%	15
▼ Family Services	9.52%	4
▼ Administration	26.19%	11
▼ Board Member	0.00%	0
▼ Other employee or volunteer	14.29%	6
▼ Other	14.29%	6
TOTAL		42

Other responses (generalized to deidentify):

- Other specialists (4)
- Teaching assistant (2)

Question 2: What site(s) do you work at? (check all that apply)

Answered: 42 Skipped: 0



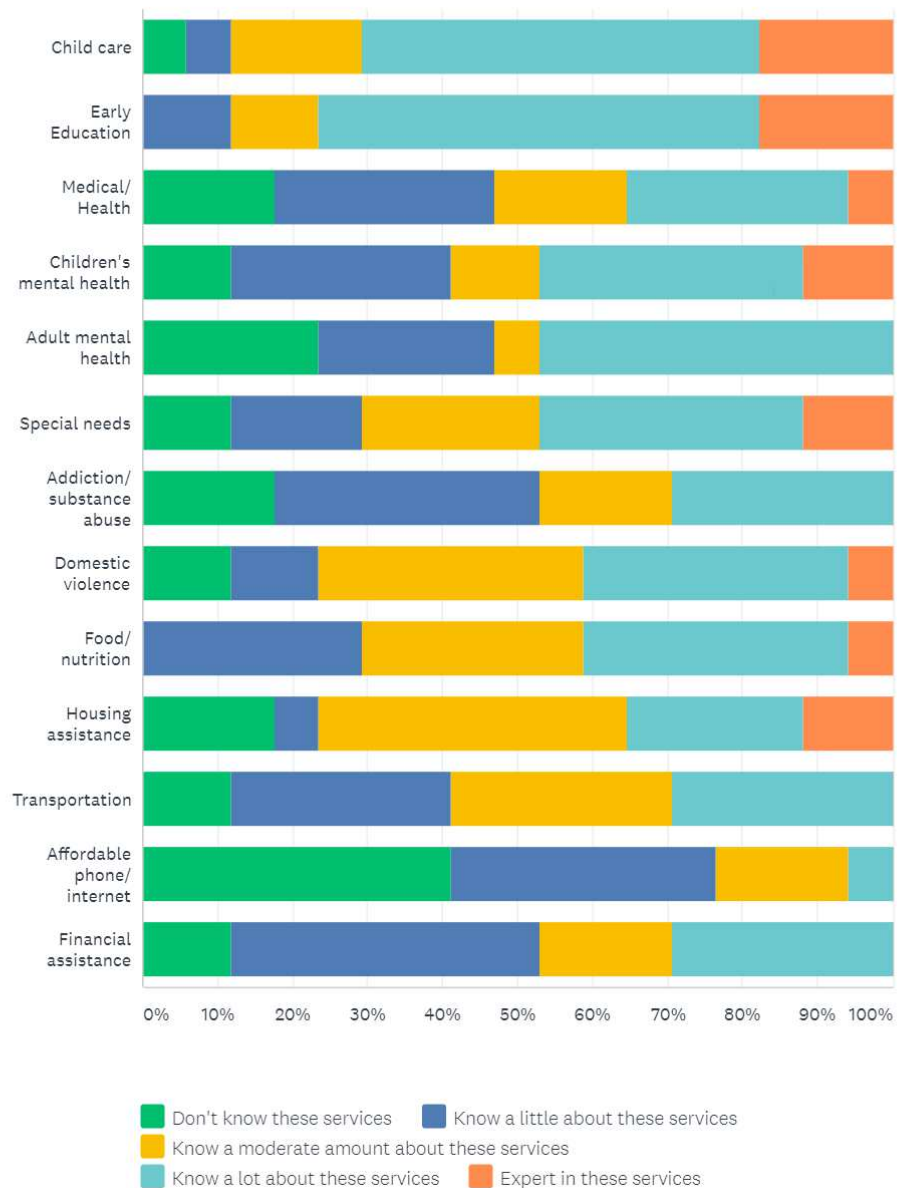
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
▼ Laurel	21.43%	9
▼ Billings - North Park	73.81%	31
▼ Billings - Terry Park	35.71%	15
▼ Lockwood	16.67%	7
Total Respondents: 42		

Knowledge of Existing Community Services

This question to both Head Start staff and community partners to get a sense of relative self-evaluation of services available and to provide a comparison between the two groups of respondents.

Community Partner Responses: How much do you know about existing services in each of these areas of potential need in our community (check the level for each community service)

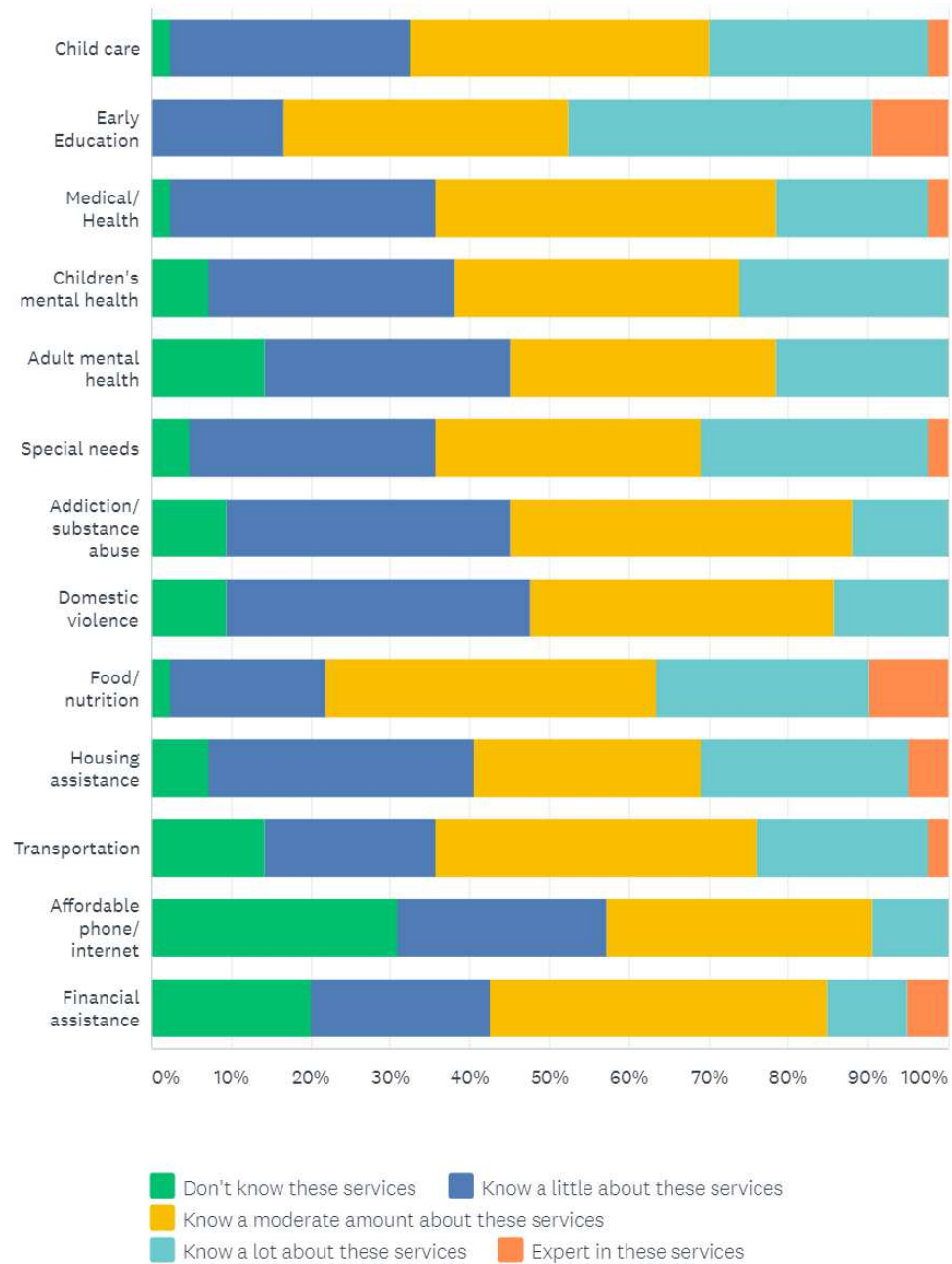
Answered: 17 Skipped: 0



	DON'T KNOW THESE SERVICES	KNOW A LITTLE ABOUT THESE SERVICES	KNOW A MODERATE AMOUNT ABOUT THESE SERVICES	KNOW A LOT ABOUT THESE SERVICES	EXPERT IN THESE SERVICES	TOTAL
▼ Child care	5.88% 1	5.88% 1	17.65% 3	52.94% 9	17.65% 3	17
▼ Early Education	0.00% 0	11.76% 2	11.76% 2	58.82% 10	17.65% 3	17
▼ Medical/ Health	17.65% 3	29.41% 5	17.65% 3	29.41% 5	5.88% 1	17
▼ Children's mental health	11.76% 2	29.41% 5	11.76% 2	35.29% 6	11.76% 2	17
▼ Adult mental health	23.53% 4	23.53% 4	5.88% 1	47.06% 8	0.00% 0	17
▼ Special needs	11.76% 2	17.65% 3	23.53% 4	35.29% 6	11.76% 2	17
▼ Addiction/ substance abuse	17.65% 3	35.29% 6	17.65% 3	29.41% 5	0.00% 0	17
▼ Domestic violence	11.76% 2	11.76% 2	35.29% 6	35.29% 6	5.88% 1	17
▼ Food/ nutrition	0.00% 0	29.41% 5	29.41% 5	35.29% 6	5.88% 1	17
▼ Housing assistance	17.65% 3	5.88% 1	41.18% 7	23.53% 4	11.76% 2	17
▼ Transportation	11.76% 2	29.41% 5	29.41% 5	29.41% 5	0.00% 0	17
▼ Affordable phone/ internet	41.18% 7	35.29% 6	17.65% 3	5.88% 1	0.00% 0	17
▼ Financial assistance	11.76% 2	41.18% 7	17.65% 3	29.41% 5	0.00% 0	17

Head Start Staff Responses: How much do you know about existing services in each of these areas of potential need in our community (check the level for each community service)

Answered: 42 Skipped: 0



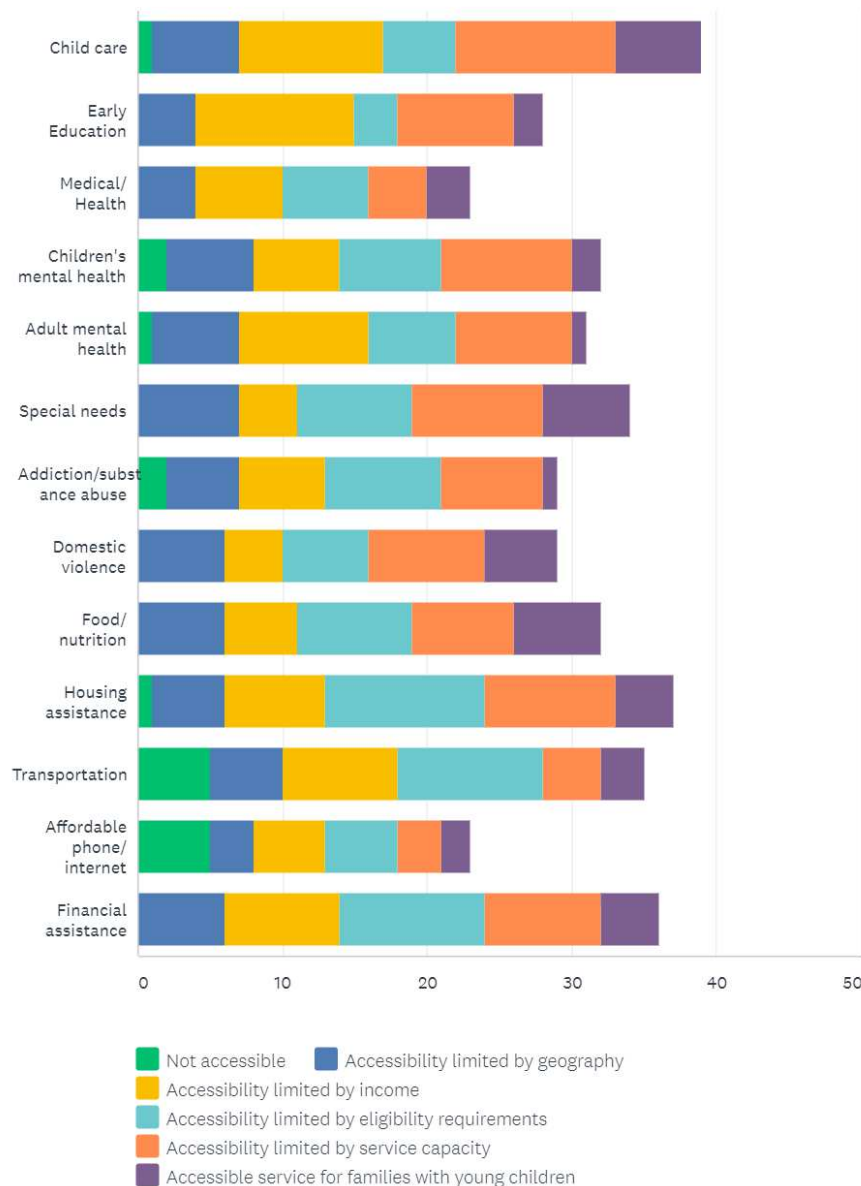
	DON'T KNOW THESE SERVICES	KNOW A LITTLE ABOUT THESE SERVICES	KNOW A MODERATE AMOUNT ABOUT THESE SERVICES	KNOW A LOT ABOUT THESE SERVICES	EXPERT IN THESE SERVICES	TOTAL
Child care	2.50% 1	30.00% 12	37.50% 15	27.50% 11	2.50% 1	40
Early Education	0.00% 0	16.67% 7	35.71% 15	38.10% 16	9.52% 4	42
Medical/ Health	2.38% 1	33.33% 14	42.86% 18	19.05% 8	2.38% 1	42
Children's mental health	7.14% 3	30.95% 13	35.71% 15	26.19% 11	0.00% 0	42
Adult mental health	14.29% 6	30.95% 13	33.33% 14	21.43% 9	0.00% 0	42
Special needs	4.76% 2	30.95% 13	33.33% 14	28.57% 12	2.38% 1	42
Addiction/ substance abuse	9.52% 4	35.71% 15	42.86% 18	11.90% 5	0.00% 0	42
Domestic violence	9.52% 4	38.10% 16	38.10% 16	14.29% 6	0.00% 0	42
Food/ nutrition	2.44% 1	19.51% 8	41.46% 17	26.83% 11	9.76% 4	41
Housing assistance	7.14% 3	33.33% 14	28.57% 12	26.19% 11	4.76% 2	42
Transportation	14.29% 6	21.43% 9	40.48% 17	21.43% 9	2.38% 1	42
Affordable phone/ internet	30.95% 13	26.19% 11	33.33% 14	9.52% 4	0.00% 0	42
Financial assistance	20.00% 8	22.50% 9	42.50% 17	10.00% 4	5.00% 2	40

Assessment of Access to Community Services

Both Head Start staff and community partners were asked to identify whether each community service area category was accessible to identify access barriers. Comparing the two groups also shows potential points of difference in perspective or knowledge between the two groups. Overall, the groups are in fairly strong agreement. In the area of “difficulties in access due to geography” community partners identify this as a challenge with more frequency.

Community Partners: How accessible do you think these services are for families with young children in our community? (check all that apply)

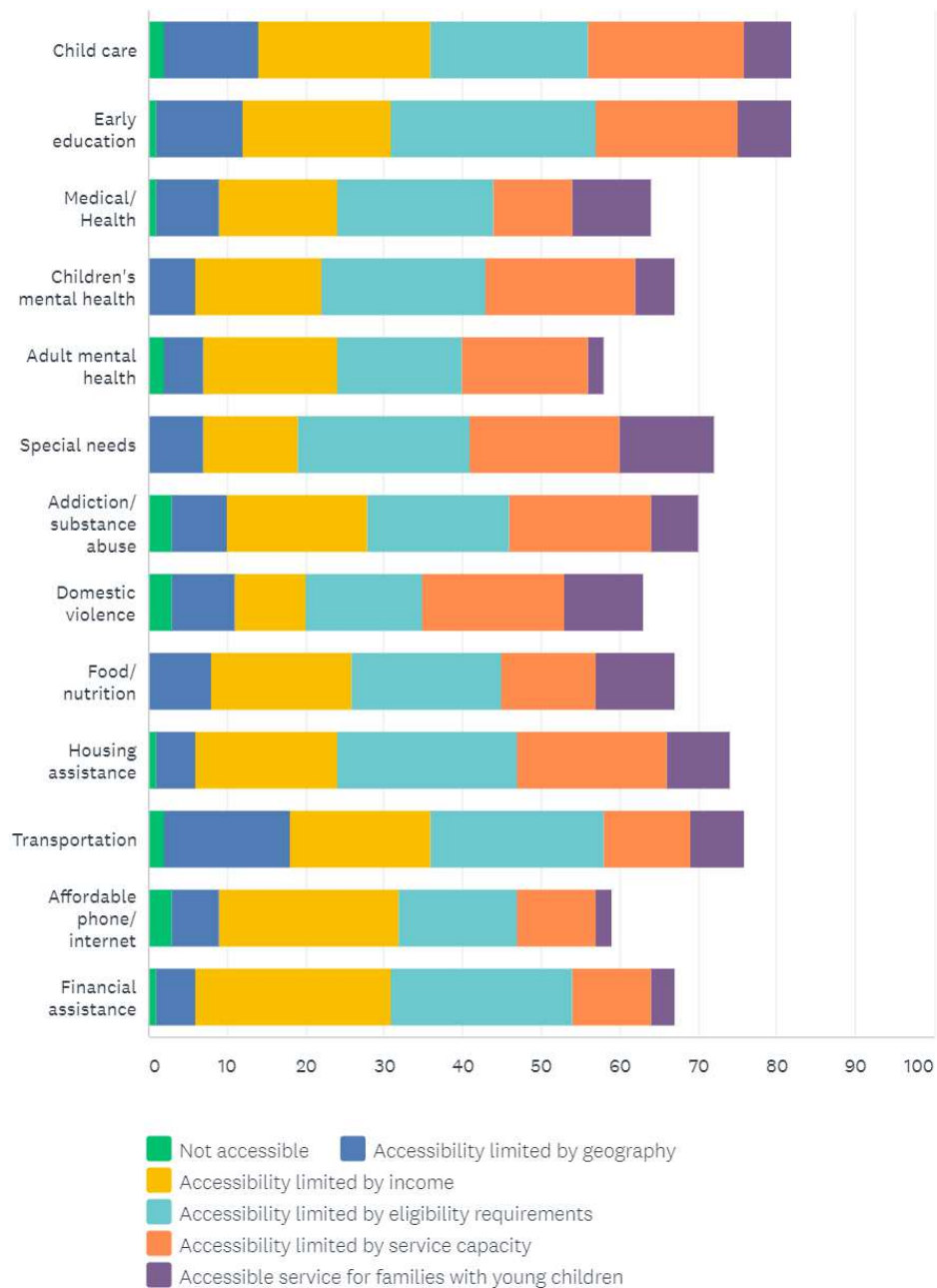
Answered: 16 Skipped: 1



	NOT ACCESSIBLE	ACCESSIBILITY LIMITED BY GEOGRAPHY	ACCESSIBILITY LIMITED BY INCOME	ACCESSIBILITY LIMITED BY ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS	ACCESSIBILITY LIMITED BY SERVICE CAPACITY	ACCESSIBLE SERVICE FOR FAMILIES WITH YOUNG CHILDREN	TOTAL RESPONDENTS
▼ Child care	6.25% 1	37.50% 6	62.50% 10	31.25% 5	68.75% 11	37.50% 6	16
▼ Early Education	0.00% 0	28.57% 4	78.57% 11	21.43% 3	57.14% 8	14.29% 2	14
▼ Medical/ Health	0.00% 0	28.57% 4	42.86% 6	42.86% 6	28.57% 4	21.43% 3	14
▼ Children's mental health	13.33% 2	40.00% 6	40.00% 6	46.67% 7	60.00% 9	13.33% 2	15
▼ Adult mental health	7.14% 1	42.86% 6	64.29% 9	42.86% 6	57.14% 8	7.14% 1	14
▼ Special needs	0.00% 0	46.67% 7	26.67% 4	53.33% 8	60.00% 9	40.00% 6	15
▼ Addiction/substance abuse	14.29% 2	35.71% 5	42.86% 6	57.14% 8	50.00% 7	7.14% 1	14
▼ Domestic violence	0.00% 0	42.86% 6	28.57% 4	42.86% 6	57.14% 8	35.71% 5	14
▼ Food/ nutrition	0.00% 0	42.86% 6	35.71% 5	57.14% 8	50.00% 7	42.86% 6	14
▼ Housing assistance	7.14% 1	35.71% 5	50.00% 7	78.57% 11	64.29% 9	28.57% 4	14
▼ Transportation	35.71% 5	35.71% 5	57.14% 8	71.43% 10	28.57% 4	21.43% 3	14
▼ Affordable phone/ internet	38.46% 5	23.08% 3	38.46% 5	38.46% 5	23.08% 3	15.38% 2	13
▼ Financial assistance	0.00% 0	46.15% 6	61.54% 8	76.92% 10	61.54% 8	30.77% 4	13

Head Start Staff: How accessible do you think these services are for families with young children in our community? (check all that apply)

Answered: 42 Skipped: 0



	NOT ACCESSIBLE	ACCESSIBILITY LIMITED BY GEOGRAPHY	ACCESSIBILITY LIMITED BY INCOME	ACCESSIBILITY LIMITED BY ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS	ACCESSIBILITY LIMITED BY SERVICE CAPACITY	ACCESSIBLE SERVICE FOR FAMILIES WITH YOUNG CHILDREN	TOTAL RESPONDENTS
▼ Child care	4.76% 2	28.57% 12	52.38% 22	47.62% 20	47.62% 20	14.29% 6	42
▼ Early education	2.44% 1	26.83% 11	46.34% 19	63.41% 26	43.90% 18	17.07% 7	41
▼ Medical/ Health	2.38% 1	19.05% 8	35.71% 15	47.62% 20	23.81% 10	23.81% 10	42
▼ Children's mental health	0.00% 0	14.63% 6	39.02% 16	51.22% 21	46.34% 19	12.20% 5	41
▼ Adult mental health	5.00% 2	12.50% 5	42.50% 17	40.00% 16	40.00% 16	5.00% 2	40
▼ Special needs	0.00% 0	16.67% 7	28.57% 12	52.38% 22	45.24% 19	28.57% 12	42
▼ Addiction/ substance abuse	7.32% 3	17.07% 7	43.90% 18	43.90% 18	43.90% 18	14.63% 6	41
▼ Domestic violence	7.50% 3	20.00% 8	22.50% 9	37.50% 15	45.00% 18	25.00% 10	40
▼ Food/ nutrition	0.00% 0	20.00% 8	45.00% 18	47.50% 19	30.00% 12	25.00% 10	40
▼ Housing assistance	2.50% 1	12.50% 5	45.00% 18	57.50% 23	47.50% 19	20.00% 8	40
▼ Transportation	5.00% 2	40.00% 16	45.00% 18	55.00% 22	27.50% 11	17.50% 7	40
▼ Affordable phone/ internet	7.50% 3	15.00% 6	57.50% 23	37.50% 15	25.00% 10	5.00% 2	40
▼ Financial assistance	2.56% 1	12.82% 5	64.10% 25	58.97% 23	25.64% 10	7.69% 3	39

Community Challenges, Assets, Critical Services, Effective Services and Gaps

Head Start staff and community partners were asked four open-ended questions to try to identify any clusters of challenges, assets, critical services, and effective services. The categories used in the previous two questions were used as a starting point, but respondents added several more categories.

In each case, individual comments were categorized and presented by group of respondents.

Respondents found Carbon County difficult to characterize. Fewer people responded, partly because not all of them worked in Carbon County, and a frequent response in those filled in what “I don’t know.” There is a fairly significant knowledge gap on services in that county.

Question: What are the most prevalent community problems that affect families with young children who are also eligible for Head Start services?				
	Yellowstone and Carbon Counties			
	Head Start Staff (39 respondents)		Partner Staff (16 respondents)	
Community Issue	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Poverty	12	15%	2	6%
Financial Assistance	0	0%		0%
Food/Nutrition	5	6%	2	6%
Housing	5	6%	8	22%
Homelessness	1	1%	0	0%
Transportation	9	11%	0	0%
Clothing	0	0%	0	0%
Communication Services	0	0%	0	0%
Child Care	9	11%	6	17%
Early Education	0	0%	1	3%
Special Needs	1	1%	1	3%
Family Stability	3	4%	0	0%
Medical	2	2%	0	0%
Mental Health	6	7%	5	14%
Child Protection and Advocacy	0	0%	0	0%
Foster Care	2	2%	0	0%
Addiction/Substance Abuse	10	12%	6	17%
Domestic Violence	2	2%	2	6%
Legal Services	0	0%	0	0%
Job Skills/Education/Employment	6	7%	0	0%
Collaboration/Partnerships	0	0%	0	0%
Referral/Connections	0	0%	1	3%
Capacity/Funding	5	6%	2	6%
Access/Eligibility/Services Offered	2	2%	0	0%
Community Awareness	0	0%	0	0%
Other	2	2%	0	0%

Question: What are the most critical services in the community for families with young children who are eligible for Head Start services?				
Topic	Yellowstone and Carbon Counties			
	Head Start Staff (40)		Partner Staff (16)	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Basic Service Assistance		0%	1	3%
Financial Assistance	4	5%	0	0%
Food/Nutrition	14	17%	6	15%
Housing	16	20%	8	20%
Transportation	4	5%	5	13%
Clothing	1	1%	1	3%
Communication Services	0	0%	0	0%
Child Care	4	5%	3	8%
Early Education	3	4%	0	0%
Special Needs	3	4%	1	3%
Parenting Development	0	0%	0	0%
Physical Health	4	5%	2	5%
Mental Health	15	19%	4	10%
Child Protection and Advocacy	1	1%	0	0%
Foster Care	0	0%	0	0%
Addiction/Substance Abuse Services	5	6%	4	10%
Domestic Violence	0	0%	0	0%
Legal Services	1	1%	0	0%
Job Skills/Education/Employment	3	4%	1	3%
Collaboration/Partnerships	0	0%	0	0%
Referral/Connections	2	2%	3	8%
Capacity/Funding	1	1%	0	0%
Access/Eligibility	0	0%	0	0%
Other	0	0%	1	3%

Question: What are positive community attributes that help families with young children?

	Yellowstone County				Carbon County			
	Head Start Staff (30 respondents)		Partner Staff (13 respondents)		Head Start Staff (16 respondents)		Partner Staff (3 respondents)	
Asset Area	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Basic Service Assistance	2	5%		0%	2	13%	0	0%
Financial Assistance	2	5%		0%	1	7%	0	0%
Food/Nutrition	1	2%	1	3%	0	0%	0	0%
Housing	0	0%	1	3%	0	0%	0	0%
Transportation	0	0%	2	7%	0	0%	0	0%
Clothing	0	0%		0%	0	0%	0	0%
Communication Services		0%		0%	0	0%	0	0%
Child Care	8	20%	4	13%	2	13%	0	0%
Early Education	7	17%	3	10%	5	33%	0	0%
Special Needs	1	2%		0%	1	7%	0	0%
Parenting Development	0	0%		0%	0	0%	0	0%
Medical	0	0%	1	3%	0	0%	0	0%
Mental Health	1	2%	1	3%	0	0%	0	0%
Child Protection and Advocacy	1	2%	1	3%	0	0%	0	0%
Foster Care	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Addiction/Substance Abuse Services	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Domestic Violence	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Legal Services	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Job Skills/Education/ Employment	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Collaboration/Partnerships	8	20%	4	13%	2	13%	2	100%
Referral/Connections	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Capacity/Funding	3	7%	5	17%	0	0%	0	0%
Access/Services offered	1	2%	5	17%	1	7%	0	0%
Community Awareness	4	10%	1	3%	0	0%	0	0%
Other	2	5%	1	3%	1	7%	0	0%

What services do you think are most useful and effectively provided to families with young children?								
Topic	Yellowstone County				Carbon County			
	Head Start Staff (32)		Partner Staff (13)		Head Start Staff (14)		Partner Staff (3)	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Basic Service Assistance	1	2%	2	6%		0%	2	40%
Financial Assistance	4	7%		0%		0%		0%
Food/Nutrition	9	16%	3	8%	1	9%		0%
Housing	8	15%	1	3%		0%		0%
Transportation		0%	3	8%		0%		0%
Clothing	1	2%		0%		0%		0%
Communication Services		0%		0%		0%		0%
Child Care	6	11%	6	17%	2	18%	1	20%
Early Education	10	18%	6	17%	3	27%		0%
Special Needs	3	5%		0%	1	9%		0%
Parenting Development	1	2%	1	3%	1	9%		0%
Medical	5	9%	4	11%	2	18%		0%
Mental Health	5	9%	1	3%		0%		0%
Child Protection and Advocacy	1	2%	1	3%		0%		0%
Foster Care		0%		0%		0%		0%
Addiction/Substance Abuse Services		0%	2	6%		0%		0%
Domestic Violence		0%		0%		0%		0%
Legal Services		0%		0%		0%		0%
Job Skills/Education/Employment		0%	2	6%		0%		0%
Collaboration/Partnerships		0%	1	3%	1	9%		0%
Referral/Connections	1	2%	1	3%		0%	2	40%

Thirty-one organizations were identified by one or more respondents as effectively providing services in the community, in addition to respondents who identified categories of services. Organizations cited were: AWARE, Best Beginnings Coalition, Best Beginnings Scholarship, Boys and Girls Club, MET Bus System, CACFP, CASA, Center for Children and Families, CHIP, Early Childhood Intervention, Early Head Start, Family Services, Family Tree, Food Bank, Head Start, HRDC, HUB, DUD, Medicaid, Parks and Recreation, Riverstone Health, Ronald McDonald House, Special Needs Co-op, WIC, YMCA, and YWCA.

Additional Resource Needs

Head Start staff and community partners were asked to identify additional resources needed.

Question: What additional resources are needed in order to more effectively assist families with young children who are eligible for Head Start services?		
Topic	Head Start Staff (30)	Partner Staff (12)
	Idea	Idea
Basic Service Assistance		
Financial Assistance		
Food/Nutrition	1) Improved food services; 2) Restore backpack program; 3) More nutritional information;	
Housing	1) Improved housing services; 2) Improved access to affordable housing; 3) More housing options (2); 4) More streamlined application	1) More affordable housing
Transportation		1) Evening and weekend transportation;
Clothing	1) Improved clothing services	
Communication Services		
Child Care	1) More child care services (2)	
Early Education	1) Head Start family engagement position that works to build parent involvement, joining FA's, teachers, parents; 2) More affordable preschool options - expansion of Head Start or additional other options	1) Maintaining preschool slots and funding for new capacity in Carbon County established after Head Start closed sites; 2) Head Start program expansion or local office to handle local cases (outside of proximity to current sites); 3) More capacity and funding for Head Start; 4) More community support with grants and scholarships
Special Needs		
Parent Development	1) Help in being self-sufficient; 2) Financial literacy and planning; 3) More parent classes (2); 4) Programs that develop the family while still holding them accountable; 5) trauma education for parents; 6) Basic life skills education;	1) More parenting classes; 2) Developing life skills; 3) More parenting classes in Carbon County; 4) Home visiting in Carbon County;

Topic	Head Start Staff (30)	Partner Staff (12)
Physical Health	1) Continuing Medicaid expansion;	
Mental Health	1) More mental health services (5); 2) trauma informed care (2); 3) Trauma classes; 4) Decreased wait time for services;	1) More mental health services;
Child Protection and Advocacy	1) CPS workforce;	
Foster Care	1) More foster care; 2) Team to support children in foster care	
Addiction/Substance Abuse Services	1) Improved access to drug treatment for parents	1) More addiction/substance abuse services; 2) More addiction treatment for parents;
Domestic Violence		
Legal Services		
Job Skills/Education/Employment	1) Better wages to support a family	1) Job training/apprenticeship programs;
Collaboration/Partnerships	1) Physical space for community resources to be together	1) More continued communication, education, and support from Yellowstone County to Carbon County
Referral/Connections		
Capacity/Funding	1) More of what is already available; 2) More funding; 3) More service providers;	1) Additional facilities to serve demand; 2) More Funding;
Access/Services offered/Eligibility		1) Improved ability to access existing services;
Community Awareness		
Other		

Ideas for Improving Family Ability to Access Community Services from within Head Start

Head Start staff were also asked to identify ideas to improve Head Start's ability to help families access community services. Their ideas are grouped and presented below. Ideas related to improving referrals and connections to services was the area with the most ideas. In the parent survey, referrals to services was rated the second more useful service Head Start offers. (Appendix B)

What could we do within Head Start to improve family ability to make the most of Head Start and other community services?	
Topic	Head Start Staff
Financial Assistance	1) Offer small financial services
Food/Nutrition	1) Provide food boxes for families in need rather than wasting leftovers
Transportation	1) Offer more transportation to Head Start
Early Education	1) Add more morning or afternoon classes
Special Needs	1) More mental health services for children with special needs on impact in classroom learning
Parent Development	1) More hands-on classes for parents to work with their children; 2) Teaching families self-sufficiency (2); 3) Try different hours and classes; 4) Ensuring parents understand benefits of early education and use of other needed services
Family Communication and Partnerships	1) Build better relationships with families (2); 2) More consistent/frequent evaluation of family needs and desires; 3) Trust building training for family advocates; 4) Engage families; 5) Engage families by inviting them in and to help more; 6) Improve family comfort coming in buildings and to know we're here to help
Referral/Connections to Services	1) Improve staff awareness of services available to families; 2) Maintain or improve communication of available community services (2); 3) Offer more resources; 4) Continue to communicate to community on Head Start services; 5) Continue to partner with community organizations; 6) Improve Empower parents to be involved in community organizations; 7) Better communication; 8) Keep inviting families; 9) Information nights on community resources; 10) Encourage use of community services for family (2); 11) Community service fair in Laurel with Head Start, St. Vincent for physicals; Winterholler for dental; WIC, Co-op, etc.; 12) Provide information through flyers, meetings, and home visits from family advocates and teachers; 13) Resource room or other inviting space with clear resources; 14) Community service fair with reps of other services coming to Head Start; 15) Continue staff training on resources; 16) Staff, family and community meetings to build awareness on community services
Capacity/Funding	1) Reduce family advocate caseloads
Expectations and Policies	1) Establish and maintain consistent rules and guidelines across sites; 2) Enrollment handout with pictures that outlines expectations; 3) More oversight and open policies

APPENDIX B: SUMMARY OF HEAD START FAMILY SURVEYS

82 Head Start families responded to a survey designed to better understand their evaluation of the usefulness of Head Start services and their interest and ability to use services in the community.

Question 1: How many adults and children are in your household, including you?

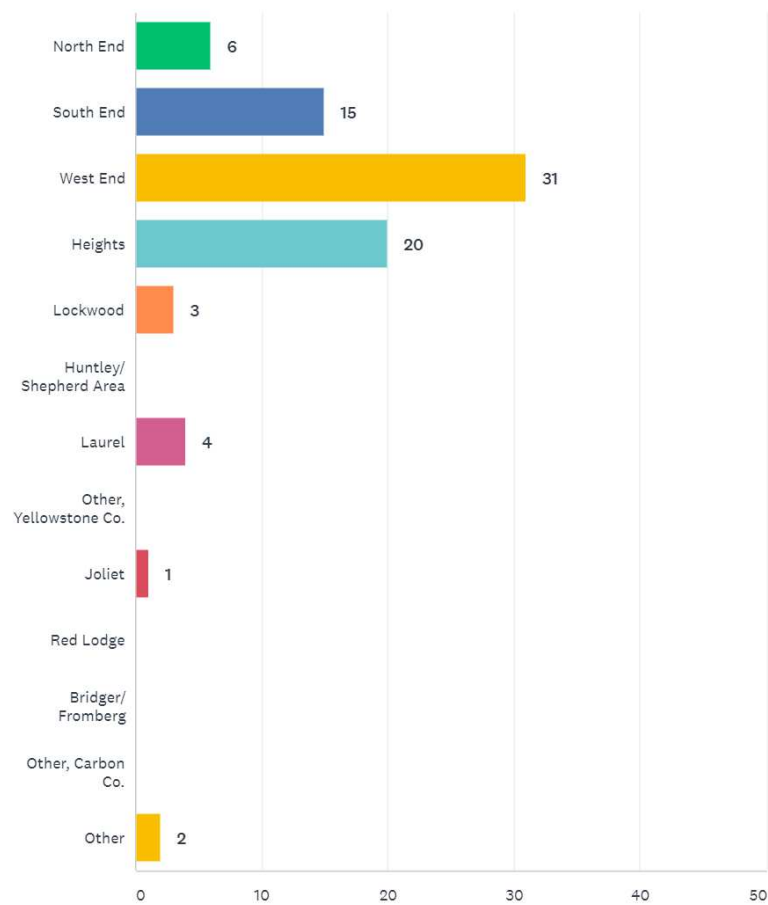
Adults and Children in the Household						
82 responses (all)	Number					
Age Group	0	1	2	3	4	5+
Adults	0	22	45	8	2	5
Baby or pregnant	29	13	0	0	0	0
Toddler (1 1/2 - 3)	20	18	9	0	1	0
Preschool (3 to start of kindergarten)	4	60	11	2	0	0
Children 5-12	16	21	8	6	2	2
Children 13-18	25	8	4	1	0	0

Most people had at least one preschool children. A few did not respond the children part of the question, though all did to the adult portion. It's a little surprising that four people said they did not have any children of preschool age, and it isn't clear if that was a mistake of the children had turned 5 and they decided to register that child in that field.

There were a handful of families with 4-9 adults living in a household. It is possible that there are cultural reasons for some of these arrangements, with multiple generations living in one house, but it could also be a reflection of housing insecurity.

Question 2: Where do you live?

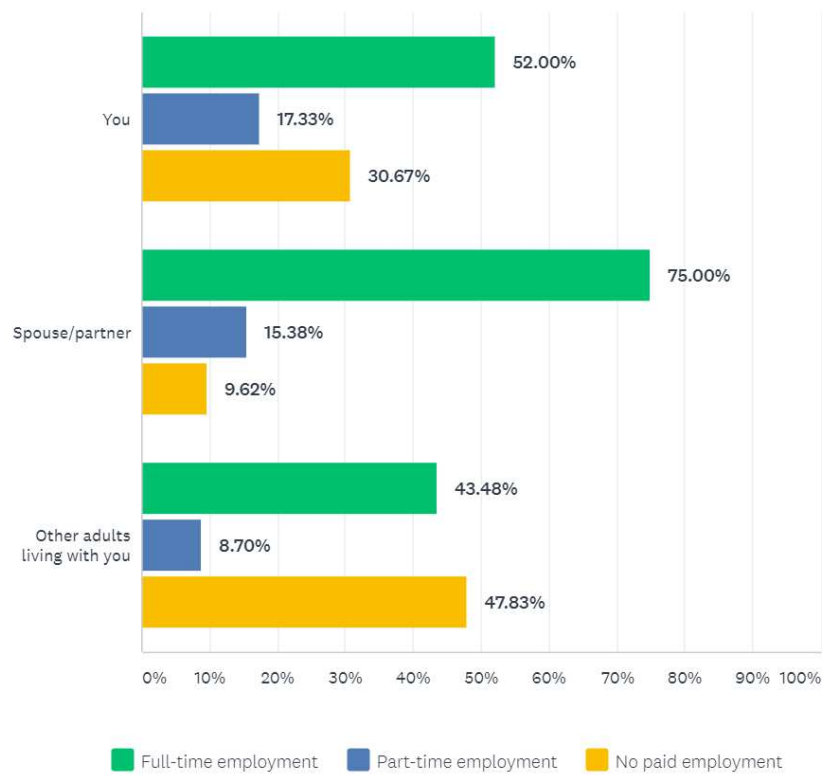
Answered: 82 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
▼ North End	7%	6
▼ South End	18%	15
▼ West End	38%	31
▼ Heights	24%	20
▼ Lockwood	4%	3
▼ Huntley/ Shepherd Area	0%	0
▼ Laurel	5%	4
▼ Other, Yellowstone Co.	0%	0
▼ Joliet	1%	1
▼ Red Lodge	0%	0
▼ Bridger/ Fromberg	0%	0
▼ Other, Carbon Co.	0%	0
▼ Other	Responses 2%	2
TOTAL		82

Question 3: How are you and any other adults in your house employed?

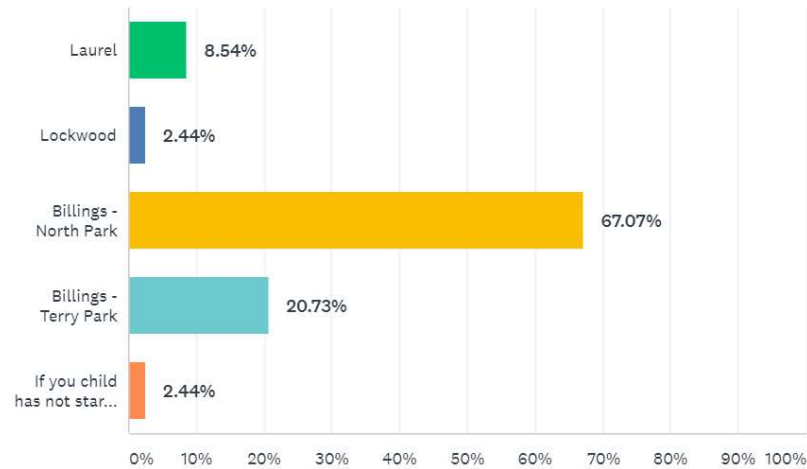
Answered: 81 Skipped: 1



	FULL-TIME EMPLOYMENT	PART-TIME EMPLOYMENT	NO PAID EMPLOYMENT	TOTAL
▼ You	52.00% 39	17.33% 13	30.67% 23	75
▼ Spouse/partner	75.00% 39	15.38% 8	9.62% 5	52
▼ Other adults living with you	43.48% 10	8.70% 2	47.83% 11	23

Question 4: Where does your child/children attend Head Start (Check all that any child has attended)

Answered: 82 Skipped: 0

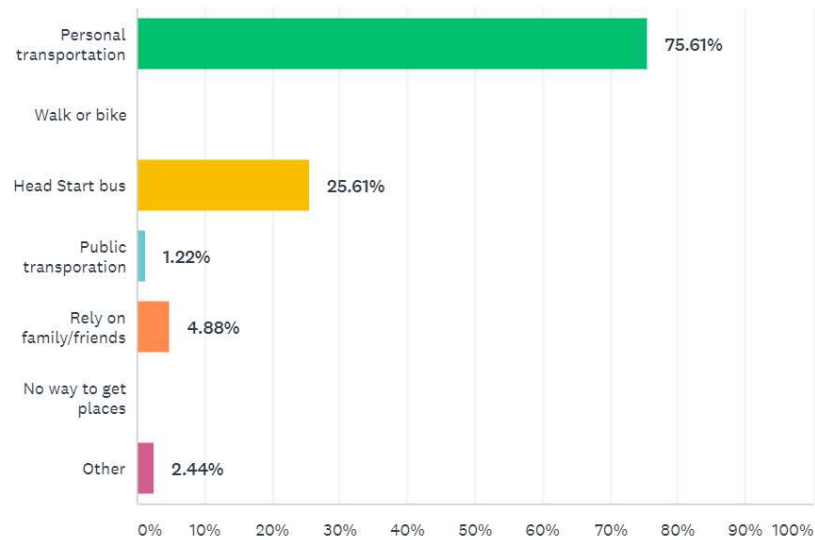


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
▼ Laurel	8.54%	7
▼ Lockwood	2.44%	2
▼ Billings - North Park	67.07%	55
▼ Billings - Terry Park	20.73%	17
▼ If you child has not started Head Start yet, let us know which site might be best for you.	Responses 2.44%	2
Total Respondents: 82		

Question 5: How do you get your children to preschool and other activities?

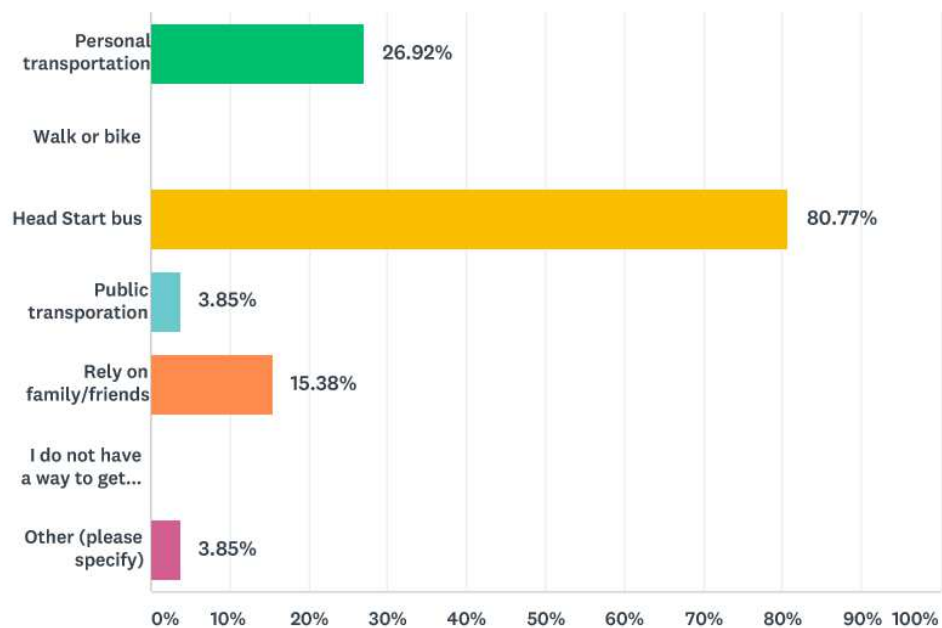
All responses:

Answered: 82 Skipped: 0



Subset who chose at least one non-personal vehicle option.

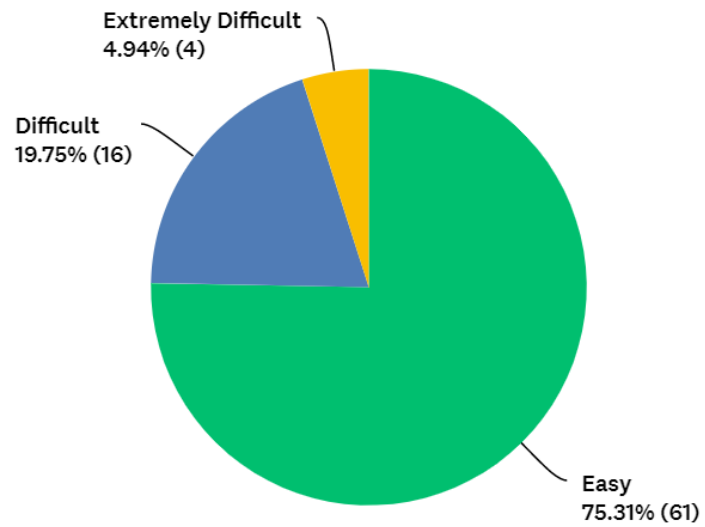
Answered: 26 Skipped: 0



Question 6: How difficult is it to get your children to care/preschool and activities?

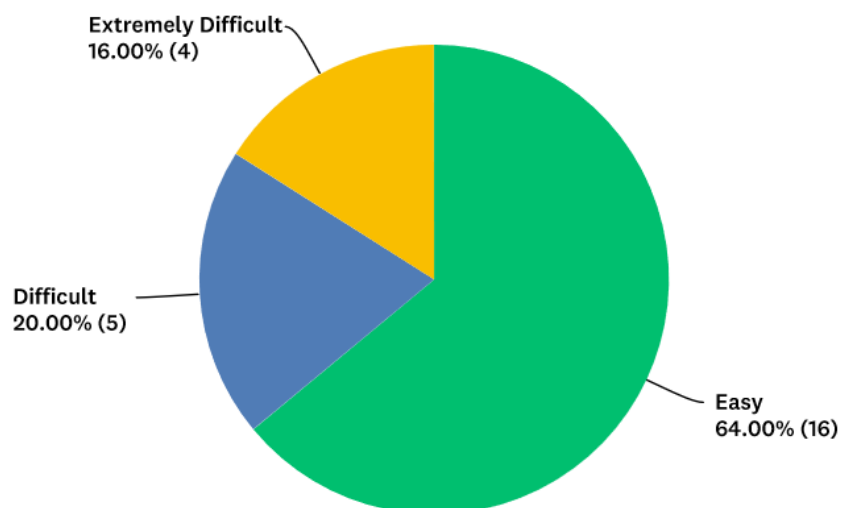
All responses:

Answered: 81 Skipped: 1



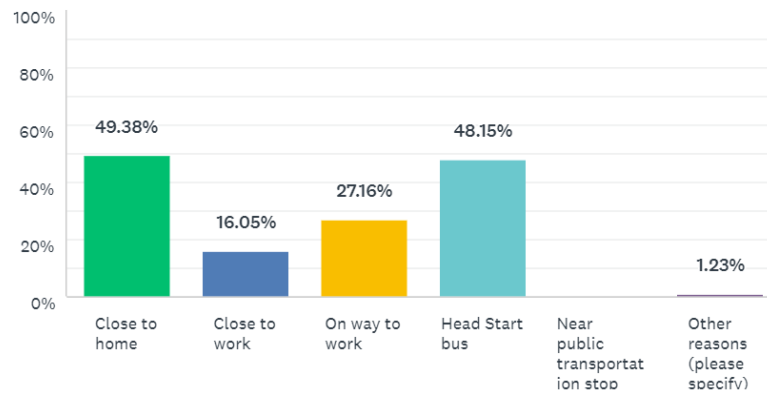
Subset who chose at least one non-personal vehicle option.

Answered: 25 Skipped: 1



Question 7: Which factors make a Head Start location more convenient? (check all that apply)

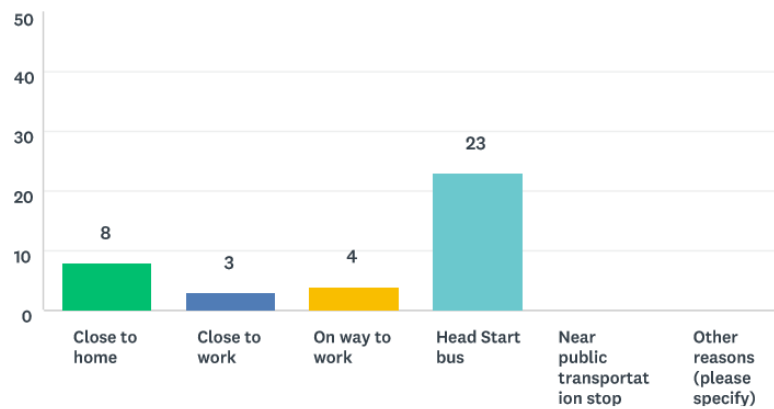
Answered: 81 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
▼ Close to home	49.38%	40
▼ Close to work	16.05%	13
▼ On way to work	27.16%	22
▼ Head Start bus	48.15%	39
▼ Near public transportation stop	0.00%	0
▼ Other reasons (please specify)	Responses 1.23%	1
Total Respondents: 81		

Question 7: Subset who checked at least one non-personal vehicle option for transport.

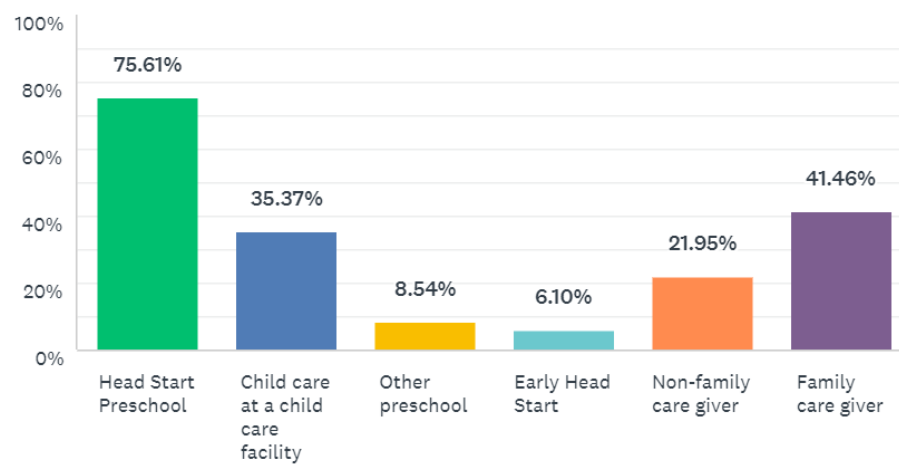
Answered: 26 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Close to home	30.77%	8
Close to work	11.54%	3
On way to work	15.38%	4
Head Start bus	88.46%	23
Near public transportation stop	0.00%	0
Other reasons (please specify)	0.00%	0
Total Respondents: 26		

Question 8: What preschool and child care services have you used in the last year for you child/children (check all that apply)

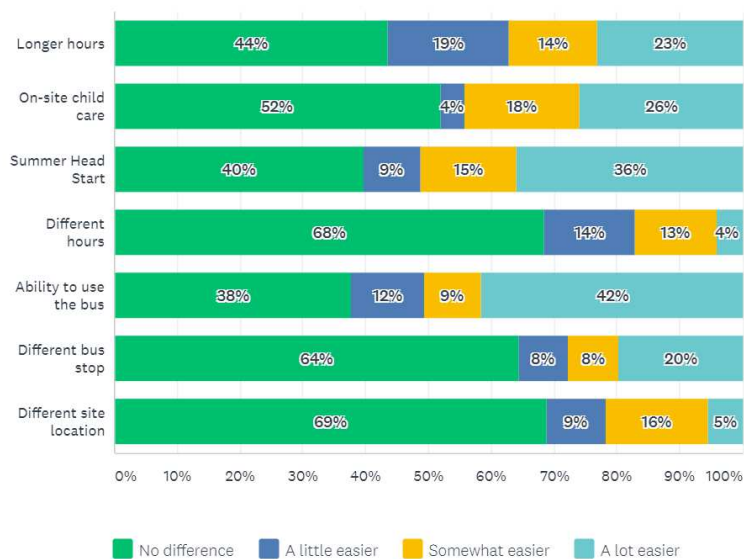
Answered: 82 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
▼ Head Start Preschool	75.61% 62
▼ Child care at a child care facility	35.37% 29
▼ Other preschool	8.54% 7
▼ Early Head Start	6.10% 5
▼ Non-family care giver	21.95% 18
▼ Family care giver	41.46% 34
Total Respondents: 82	

Question 9: How much would these things make it easier to use Head Start?

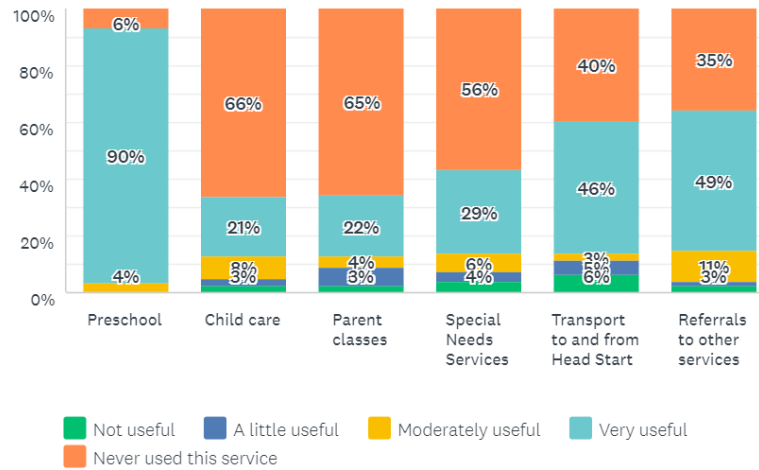
Answered: 82 Skipped: 0



	NO DIFFERENCE	A LITTLE EASIER	SOMEWHAT EASIER	A LOT EASIER	TOTAL
▼ Longer hours	44% 34	19% 15	14% 11	23% 18	78
▼ On-site child care	52% 40	4% 3	18% 14	26% 20	77
▼ Summer Head Start	40% 31	9% 7	15% 12	36% 28	78
▼ Different hours	68% 52	14% 11	13% 10	4% 3	76
▼ Ability to use the bus	38% 29	12% 9	9% 7	42% 32	77
▼ Different bus stop	64% 49	8% 6	8% 6	20% 15	76
▼ Different site location	69% 51	9% 7	16% 12	5% 4	74

Question 10: How useful are these services that services that Head Start currently provides for you and your family?

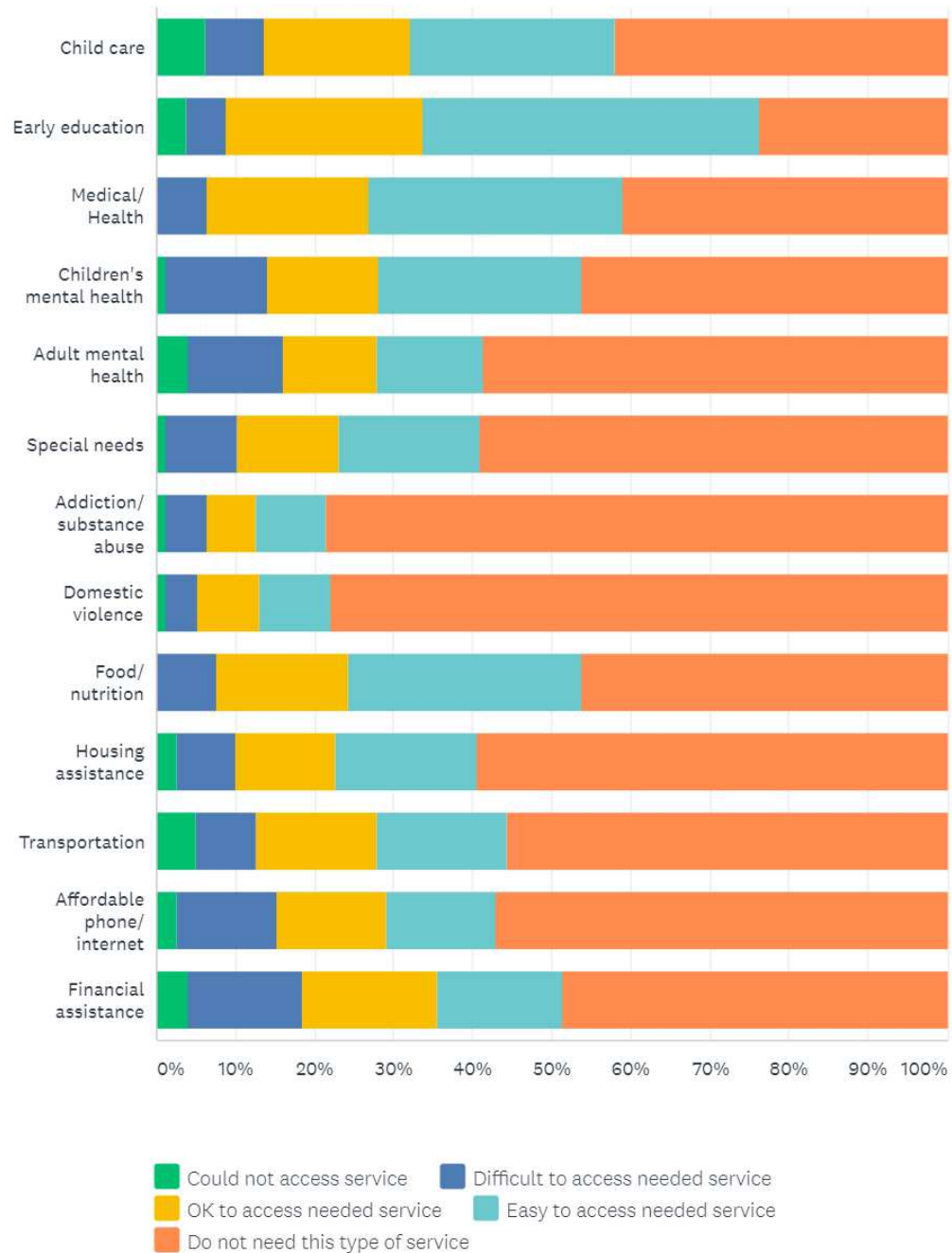
Answered: 80 Skipped: 2



	NOT USEFUL	A LITTLE USEFUL	MODERATELY USEFUL	VERY USEFUL	NEVER USED THIS SERVICE	TOTAL
Preschool	0% 0	0% 0	4% 3	90% 72	6% 5	80
Child care	3% 2	3% 2	8% 6	21% 16	66% 51	77
Parent classes	3% 2	6% 5	4% 3	22% 17	65% 51	78
Special Needs Services	4% 3	4% 3	6% 5	29% 23	56% 44	78
Transport to and from Head Start	6% 5	5% 4	3% 2	46% 36	40% 31	78
Referrals to other services	3% 2	1% 1	11% 9	49% 39	35% 28	79

Question 11: How easy has it been to use these community services that your family needed? (check the answer that fits the best for each one)

Answered: 82 Skipped: 0

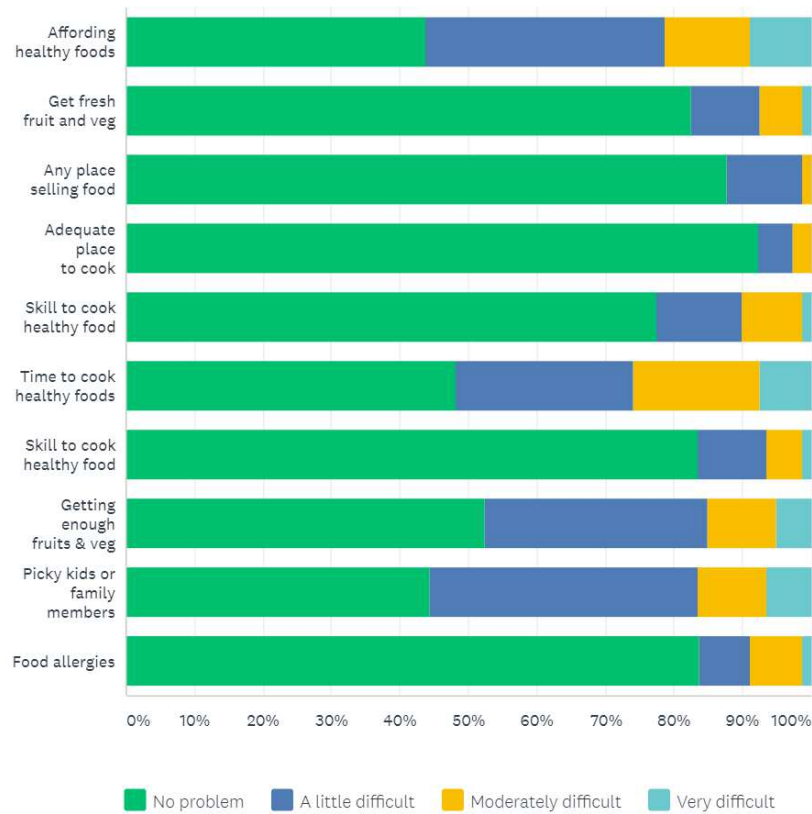


	▼ COULD NOT ACCESS SERVICE	▼ DIFFICULT TO ACCESS NEEDED SERVICE	▼ OK TO ACCESS NEEDED SERVICE	▼ EASY TO ACCESS NEEDED SERVICE	▼ DO NOT NEED THIS TYPE OF SERVICE	▼ TOTAL
▼ Child care	6% 5	7% 6	19% 15	26% 21	42% 34	81
▼ Early education	4% 3	5% 4	25% 20	43% 34	24% 19	80
▼ Medical/ Health	0% 0	6% 5	21% 16	32% 25	41% 32	78
▼ Children's mental health	1% 1	13% 10	14% 11	26% 20	46% 36	78
▼ Adult mental health	4% 3	12% 9	12% 9	13% 10	59% 44	75
▼ Special needs	1% 1	9% 7	13% 10	18% 14	59% 46	78
▼ Addiction/ substance abuse	1% 1	5% 4	6% 5	9% 7	78% 62	79
▼ Domestic violence	1% 1	4% 3	8% 6	9% 7	78% 60	77
▼ Food/ nutrition	0% 0	8% 6	17% 13	29% 23	46% 36	78
▼ Housing assistance	3% 2	8% 6	13% 10	18% 14	59% 47	79
▼ Transportation	5% 4	8% 6	15% 12	16% 13	56% 44	79
▼ Affordable phone/ internet	3% 2	13% 10	14% 11	14% 11	57% 45	79
▼ Financial assistance	4% 3	14% 11	17% 13	16% 12	49% 37	76

Comments (0)

Question 12: Which challenges have you had with making and eating healthy food for your family in the last year? (check the answer that fits best for each one)

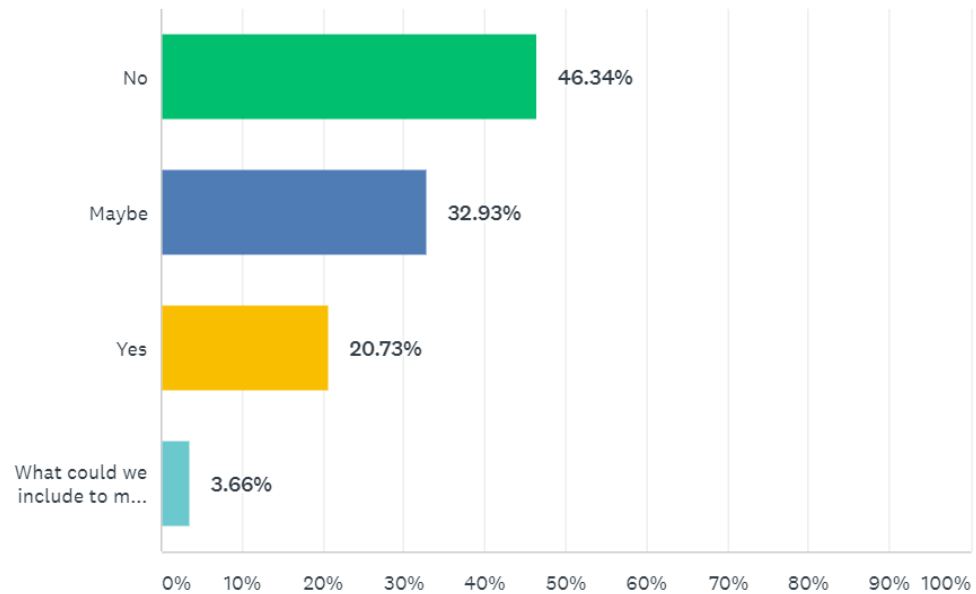
Answered: 82 Skipped: 0



	NO PROBLEM	A LITTLE DIFFICULT	MODERATELY DIFFICULT	VERY DIFFICULT	TOTAL
▼ Affording healthy foods	43.75% 35	35.00% 28	12.50% 10	8.75% 7	80
▼ Get fresh fruit and veg	82.50% 66	10.00% 8	6.25% 5	1.25% 1	80
▼ Any place selling food	87.65% 71	11.11% 9	1.23% 1	0.00% 0	81
▼ Adequate place to cook	92.41% 73	5.06% 4	2.53% 2	0.00% 0	79
▼ Skill to cook healthy food	77.50% 62	12.50% 10	8.75% 7	1.25% 1	80
▼ Time to cook healthy foods	48.15% 39	25.93% 21	18.52% 15	7.41% 6	81
▼ Skill to cook healthy food	83.54% 66	10.13% 8	5.06% 4	1.27% 1	79
▼ Getting enough fruits & veg	52.50% 42	32.50% 26	10.00% 8	5.00% 4	80
▼ Picky kids or family members	44.30% 35	39.24% 31	10.13% 8	6.33% 5	79
▼ Food allergies	83.75% 67	7.50% 6	7.50% 6	1.25% 1	80

Question 13: Would you be interested in opportunities to learn more about getting and preparing nutritious foods?

Answered: 82 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
▼ No	46.34%	38
▼ Maybe	32.93%	27
▼ Yes	20.73%	17
▼ What could we include to make this most useful to you?	3.66%	3

Ideas:

- Recipes
- A few different class times or different days
- Cooking events

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