



Community Engagement Report: Parent Interviews

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OVERVIEW

Raising Readers Nashville (formerly Blueprint for Early Childhood Success) is developing a new strategic plan for its efforts in Davidson County in partnership with Tennesseans for Quality Early Education (TQEE)'s Bright Start TN network. Community engagement is a central component of this plan's development to ensure the thoughts and perspectives of impacted families, parents and children are incorporated.

A total of 14 parents were interviewed, including eight English-speaking parents and six Spanish-speaking parents. Although this sample size is small and the data is not statistically significant, some general themes emerged from all the interviews.

Key Takeaways

- The concept of the “early childhood education system” is challenging for many parents to grapple with on their own.
- Parents recognize the need for their children to access quality education to reach their goals, but many barriers exist in obtaining said “quality” education.
- Individual, institutional and systemic barriers need to be addressed to ensure families and children are supported and thriving.
- Parental engagement in their children’s learning is critical in addressing early childhood education and should be supported by the early childhood system.
- School structures and environments are critical in setting up children for success.
- Delay, disconnection and lack of resources is the major challenge that parents and children face in navigating the early childhood education system.
- Daycares are inaccessible and expensive for families.
- A lack of individualized student support is a major issue that negatively impacts children.

Recommendations

- Popular education strategies are needed to help parents connect their own personal experiences with the larger structures and institutions making up the early childhood education system.
- Additional and more robust research is needed to better understand parents’ perspectives, experiences and attitudes regarding early childhood education in Nashville.
- Raising Readers Nashville’s work should be parent-guided/led, particularly by parents most impacted by educational inequities.
- Early childhood education institutions, including daycares and schools, should communicate and engage with parents more regularly and intentionally.

- Schools and daycares should shift practices, programming and policies to create more supportive structures and environments for students and their families.
- Resources should be easily accessible and provided without delays to families and children who need them.
- Resources should be culturally and linguistically-responsive to all families with children in the early childhood education system.
- Daycares should be accessible, low-cost and equitable.
- Targeted and individualized student support should be provided to all students, particularly those students from marginalized communities.

INTRODUCTION

Raising Readers Nashville is a community movement advancing Nashville through literacy justice for all children. Raising Readers Nashville is working in partnership with Tennesseans for Quality Early Education (TQEE)'s Bright Start TN initiative that brings together a statewide network of community partners dedicated to accelerating early learning outcomes and closing achievement and opportunity gaps for Tennessee children birth through third grade. As part of participation in the Bright Start TN network, Raising Readers Nashville is developing an updated strategic plan for its efforts in Nashville. Community engagement is a central component of this plan's development to ensure the voices, thoughts and perspectives of impacted families, parents and children are incorporated. Overall, a total of three phases will be included in the implementation process:

1. Individual parent interviews prior to selection of strategies
2. Focus groups to provide feedback on tentatively selected strategies
3. Focus groups to provide feedback on finalized implementation plan and included strategies

This report focuses on the findings of the individual parent interviews. Subsequent reports will be shared regarding the focus groups' findings, analysis and recommendations.

METHODOLOGY

Community engagement efforts for the Raising Readers Nashville plan are a collaboration between Elevate Consulting, United Way of Greater Nashville (UWGN) and two independent consultants, Sarah Bounse and Megan O'Roark. Due to time constraints, the community engagement process was driven by the consultants and UWGN staff, instead of being primarily community-driven. The consultants and United Way of Greater Nashville staff working on community engagement will be referred to as the "Community Engagement Team" or "team" throughout the report.

The goal of the parent interviews was to better understand the “journey” that parents and children travel in their navigation of the early childhood education system in Nashville/Davidson County. Initially, these questions were meant to be used in focus groups with parent groups in Davidson County to hear from a wider variety of voices. However, due to time constraints, it was more feasible to use these questions in individual parent interviews. Using a “journey mapping” framework, the team developed a series of questions to ask parents. These questions focused on the successes, challenges and barriers in their children’s educational journey. Parents were also asked to imagine a future in which the challenges and barriers they described had been solved and to dream about what could be possible for them, their families, their children and the education system as a whole.

Initial parent outreach was conducted by UWGN staff, who reached out to their Raising Readers Nashville community partners for specific parent names, contact information, primary language and need for an interpreter. As none of the Community Engagement Team spoke Spanish, Arabic or Kurdish, team members conducted initial follow-up to parents who spoke English and/or did not need an interpreter.

A total of 14 English-speaking parents were contacted via email, followed by 7 parents contacted via phone. Out of these parents, a total of 8 agreed to a parent interview. Parent interviews for English-speaking parents were conducted over a two-week period, August 15-26. Interviews were conducted primarily over the phone, while Zoom was also offered as an option. Interview questions were in a Google document that each interviewer used as their interview guide. Also, the Google document served as space for note-taking during each interview. Interviews were not recorded.

A community partner (Nashville Public Library Children’s Services) who was bilingual in Spanish and English was asked to conduct parent outreach and interview Spanish-speaking parents. These interviews were conducted from August 24-September 2. The community partner translated the interview questions from English to Spanish, interviewed parents in Spanish, then translated their responses into English. A total of 6 Spanish-speaking parents were interviewed.

Although outreach was made to community partners who serve Arabic-speaking and Kurdish-speaking parents, it was not possible to work with those partners given the project’s time constraints. Therefore, no Arabic-speaking nor Kurdish-speaking parents were interviewed during this process.

All interviews were analyzed using a grounded theory method of qualitative analysis. All interviews were downloaded as Word documents. A team member reviewed each interview and began the process of coding, starting with open coding, followed by axial coding, and then selective coding. Each process of coding was put into an Excel spreadsheet to track each one. Also, emerging themes were developed through the coding process.

Limitations

The number of parent interviews was low and the data is statistically insignificant, so it is not possible to make large generalizations about all parents' experiences, attitudes and thoughts based on these findings. Also, no Arabic or Kurdish-speaking parents were engaged in this interview process, so key demographics are missing from this analysis. Ultimately, these findings are a starting point in a conversation on parent input and engagement, but not enough to make universal claims on parents' experiences.

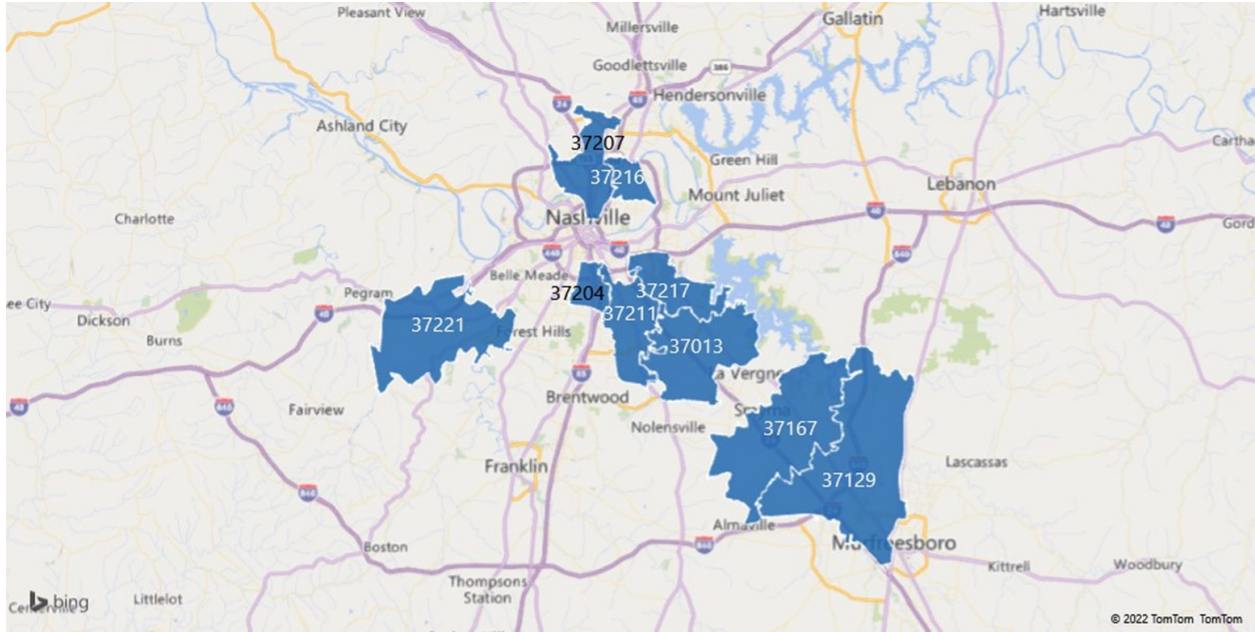
FINDINGS

Respondent Demographics

A total of 14 parents were interviewed during this process. Eight English-speaking parents and six Spanish-speaking parents were interviewed. Respondents had a range of children, from one child to four children with the vast majority having two children (64%, 9 parents). Ages of the respondents' children ranged from seven months to 18 years old. The grades of each child ranged from daycare to high school graduates. A total of 30 children were school-aged, including daycare attendees. About 45 percent of these children were in first grade or lower, while about 55 percent were between second and 12th grade.

Respondents' children attended schools in Davidson County and Rutherford County. Out of a total 30 children attending school, 50 percent attended MNPS schools, including magnet schools, non-magnet schools and charter schools in the MNPS system. More than half of those MNPS students attended charter schools (53%), while the remainder attended both magnet and non-magnet schools. Non-MNPS students attended a mix of Rutherford County Public Schools (17%), semi-private schools (13%), daycare (13%), and Montessori schools (3%).

Respondents lived in a wide range of zipcodes in Middle Tennessee, including these: 37167, 37211, 37216, 37013, 37207, 37129, 37217, 37204, 37221 and 37013. Below is a map that displays the physical locations of respondents.



Hopes and Dreams

Respondents were asked several questions to better understand their dreams and visions of success for their children. The initial interview question asked, “What does success look like for your child(ren)’s education?” and the follow-up question asked, “What do you hope for [your child(ren)]?” A wide range of responses were gathered and coalesced around several key themes. The vast majority of parent responses stated that they hoped their children would **reach academic success**, followed by hoping their children would **find professional success** in the future. Additional themes that were fairly high among all respondents included hoping their children would be able to **access quality education** and **graduate school** (high school, college, and/or graduate school). Respondents also hoped that their children would develop **strong social and emotional skills**. Among all parent responses, additional themes mentioned were the desire for children to meet their developmental milestones and ensure their children were happy in the future.

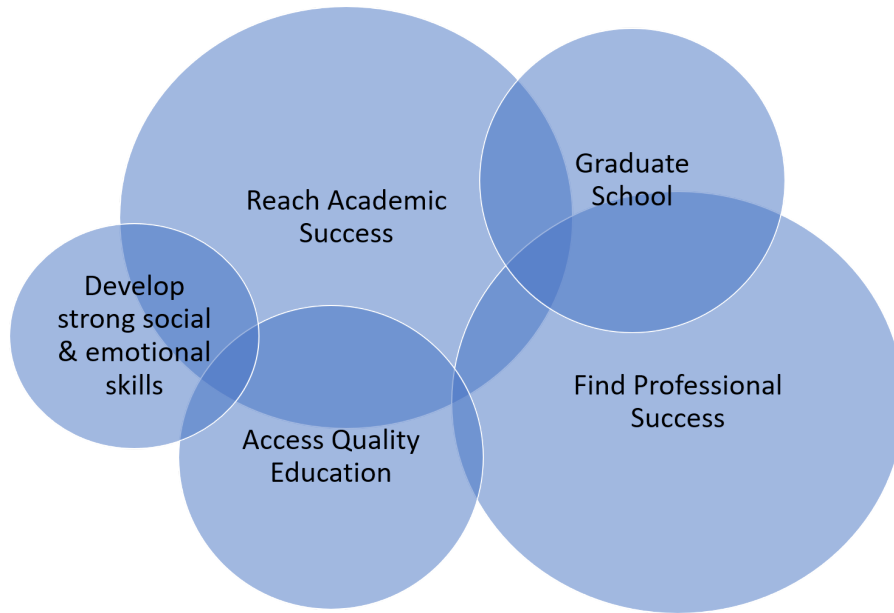


Image 1: Hopes and Dreams

Differences existed among the responses that Spanish-speaking parents shared compared to English-speaking parents. Spanish-speaking parents hoped their children would have **family and parental presence and support**, while no English-speaking parents stated this as a response. English-speaking parents stated their hope that their children would **contribute to society as adults**. No Spanish-speaking parents shared a similar sentiment.

Strengths and Assets

Parents were asked about what was working well in their children’s education so far, including past and current experiences. This particular question illustrated clear differences in responses between Spanish-speaking parents and English-speaking parents.

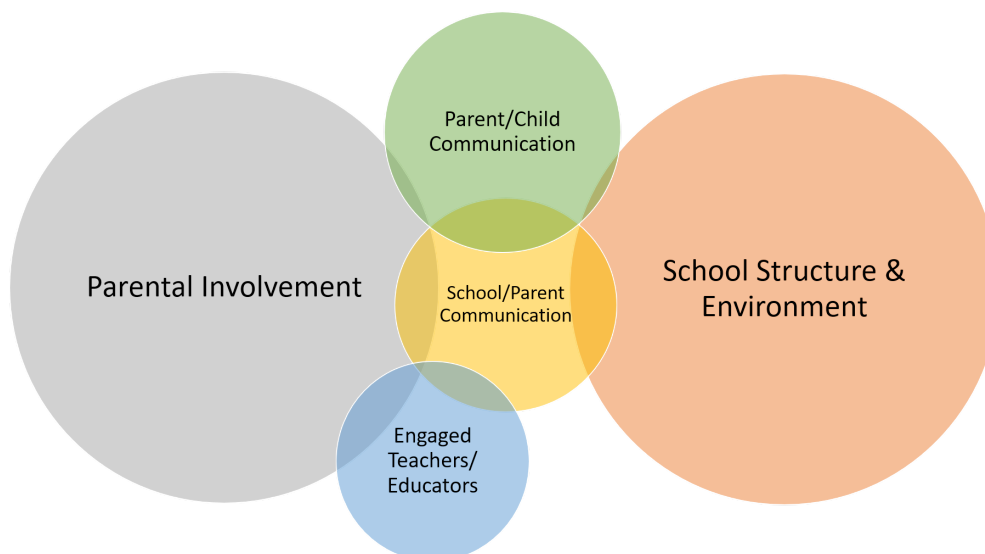


Image 2: Strengths and Assets

The vast majority of English-speaking parents stated that **parental involvement in their children’s learning** was the main strategy that worked well for their children’s education. These parents shared specific strategies to support their children’s learning at home, including making up songs, using visual learning tools (i.e., hanging up educational posters in children’s rooms), being hands-on (i.e., conducting scientific experiments together), using incentives and rewards as motivation, and playing other forms of entertainment (i.e., *Daniel Tiger’s Neighborhood*). However, no Spanish-speaking parents shared similar responses.

Among Spanish-speaking parents, the vast majority shared that their children’s **school structure and environment** was the aspect of their children’s education that worked well. A small number of English-speaking parents agreed with this sentiment. The parents that shared this response stated that their children’s schools provided additional accountability in their children’s learning, as well as more academic challenges. As one parent stated, “The school [my daughter] is currently in, the environment is very thriving for her. The different challenges [push] her into mastery. It’s not just laid back and not just complacent, it’s hard work.”

Additional themes that emerged was the helpfulness of **educators and teachers engaging** with their children at school, as well as **communication between the school and parents**. Also stated was the importance of **communication between parents and their children**. However, the number of parent responses that stated these themes was small.

Challenges, Barriers and Problems

Parents were also asked about the challenges, barriers and/or problems they or their children have experienced in trying to reach their children’s educational goals.

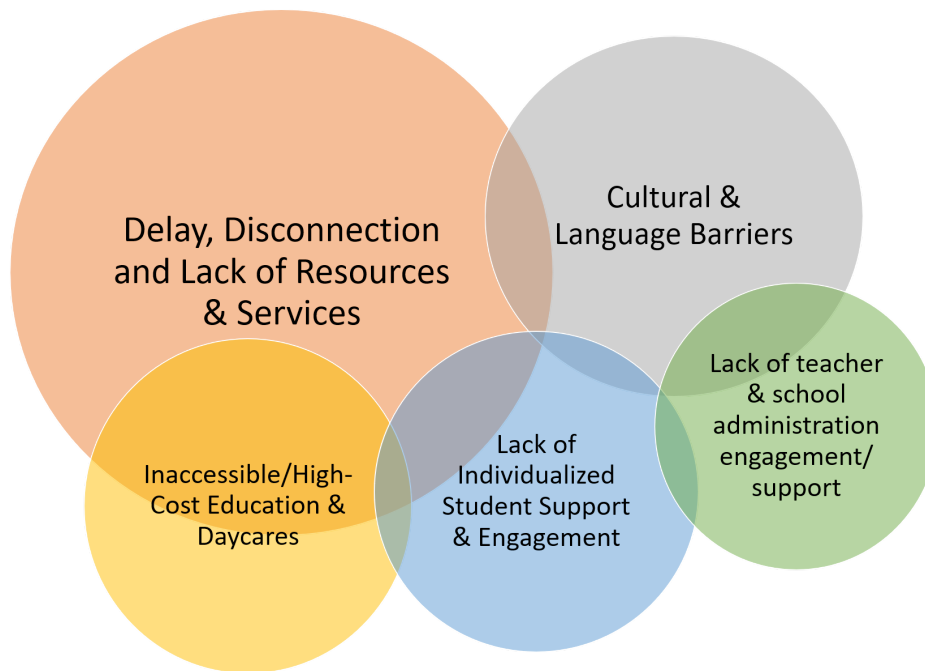


Image 3: Challenges, Barriers and Problems

The theme that emerged as the major barrier in achieving children’s educational goals among all parent responses was the **delay, disconnection and lack of resources, services and support for parents and kids**. These barriers took a variety of forms, including lack of wifi access, laptops and/or printers at home; challenges finding tutoring; unclear communication in MNPS school registration; delays in obtaining special education services in MNPS schools; and lack of cultural and language services for Spanish-speaking children and families.

In particular, the **cultural and language barriers** were a major theme among Spanish-speaking parent respondents. A parent who recently immigrated to the United States five years ago from Venezuela shared that her 5th and 7th grade children experienced multiple challenges due to cultural and language barriers:

It was hard at the beginning when they started school. The kids didn’t know how to write or read in English. As a mom, I was desperate because they were not getting good grades. We had to adapt to this new environment. It is hard to adjust to a new system and different customs. But I realized that it is important to ask for help, not [just] financial, but how to navigate the system. My child said to me on his first day of school “How come do you send me to a school where I can’t understand the teacher?”...Also, the kids had a hard time making friends at the beginning because of the language barrier.

Ultimately, this family was able to better learn and understand English by using resources from the public library, which this parent offered as a major positive resource for her and her children. Another parent mentioned how her son only spoke Spanish when entering daycare and was unable to communicate with any of the daycare teachers and fellow children. Luckily, the parent

found a job at the same daycare so she was able to provide language support to her child while he attended.

Another major barrier that English-speaking parents mentioned was the **high-cost and inaccessibility of “quality” education and daycares**. With regards to daycare, parents discussed the high costs, lack of financial assistance and long waiting lists for any daycare in Middle Tennessee. One mom mentioned that she had to go back to work while her child was still on waiting lists for daycares: “[I had] no one to watch her...it was hard.” Other parents shared the high cost of finding “highly-rated” schools, primarily located in high cost neighborhoods and counties. One parent described the challenges in moving to Davidson County and trying to find a home:

We were looking at school ratings to make sure our house was in a highly [rated] zoned school, but we couldn't afford to live in those highly-rated school zones...When we moved [to] where we [currently] live, [the zoned school my children now attend] was [rated] a 4 out of 10 school...Many people didn't want us to live in Davidson County. There was a big push [for us] to live in Williamson County.

Additional barriers included a **lack of individualized student support and engagement**. Several parent responses indicated that their children were ready to move forward in their learning and development, but were unable to do so because their child's school and classroom operated based on specific rules based on the majority. No exceptions were made for students who were ready for additional academic challenges, new developmental milestones, or more support. Several parents discussed how their children were bored or restless in school due to being knowledgeable about the curriculum, but they eventually fell behind due to their lack of engagement. One parent took matters in her own hands:

I am from Jamaica and where advancement is concerned, it is based on proficiency and knowledge. In America, advancement happens by age. My child is a late September kid, [and MNPS] has a strict rule about age. But I knew my child was ready for kindergarten even at under 5 years old. She was still 4, but I knew she didn't need to go to pre-k, so I refused to take no for an answer...I tried Metro schools, but she [had] to be 5 by August 15. I asked myself, “Am I going to just sit here and have her wait a whole year [to start kindergarten]?” I started calling private schools and one of the schools said we have a spot and we'll test her. If she passes, she can go forward. She took the test and was able to get into kindergarten for [that] year. [It] was costly but [I] did it for her. I knew she was ready and didn't want to hold my child back.

Another barrier shared by several parents was the **lack of teacher and school administration engagement, care and support**. They stated that their children's teachers did not care if they were actually learning and instead, pushed their children through the system without any evidence of gaining knowledge. Other parents described situations where teachers did not listen

to their concerns or worries about their children, such as concerns about a child that may have a learning disability or that Spanish-speaking children were experiencing language barriers in their learning. This theme was also illustrated by a parent describing incidents of racist bullying her child experienced, in which the teacher and school administrator’s responses were “inappropriate.”

Additional barriers shared by parents included a **lack of supportive school structures and environments** and a **lack of parent and family engagement by the schools**. However, 36 percent of all respondents did not name a barrier or challenge they had dealt with in their children’s education.

Ideal Futures

Parents were asked to envision an ideal future in which the problems, barriers and challenges they described earlier had been solved. In particular, respondents imagined how their family, their children and the education system would be different in this ideal future. These questions were asked in two-parts with the first question focused on the impact of this new imagined future on their family and children, while the second question honed in on what would be different in the education system in the future.

Impact on Families and Children

Within the first part of this question, nearly all English-speaking parents provided responses regarding the impact on their *families and children*; yet only half of Spanish-speaking parents did so. However, out of the collected responses, several themes emerged and overlapped among both groups of parents.

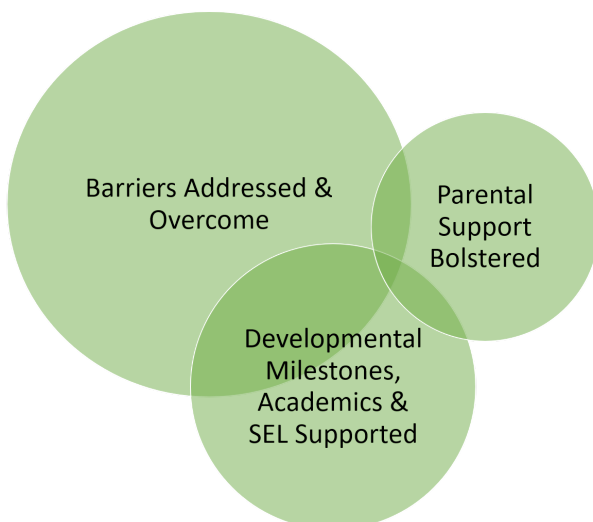


Image 4: Impact on Families & Children

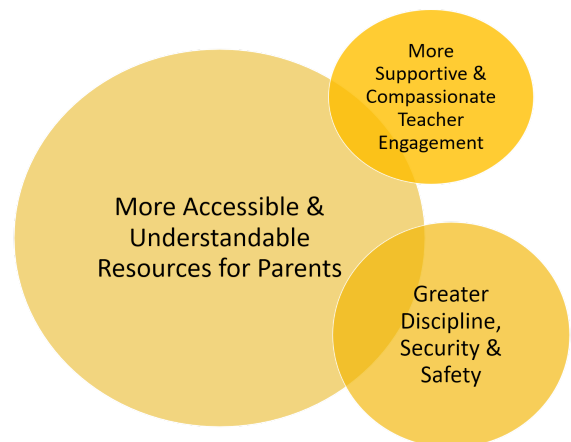


Image 5: Impact on Education System

The major theme that emerged regarding the impact of this idealized world on their family and children, parents stated that in this future, the **individual, institutional and systemic barriers that impact their children would be addressed and overcome**. Specifically, respondents shared their hope and possibility of themselves and their children getting out of poverty and becoming financially stable due to education. As one parent shared, “[My family] would have a better quality of life.” Additionally, parents also described their desire for more supportive environments within their children’s schools and daycares. A Spanish-speaking respondent described how, if her children’s schools had provided more culturally- and linguistically-responsive communication and resources to navigate the school system, “It would [have been] 100% better for the family. The time to adapt and get used to the new system would have been shorter.”

Another theme that surfaced was that parents hoped that their children’s **developmental milestones, academic learning and social-emotional skills would be actively supported and bolstered** in this imagined future. One parent shared how her son had experienced struggles in his math and science classes. As the parent stated, “[If he had been connected to tutoring earlier] his level of confidence would have been better...he would have had more independence in doing homework and then would have felt more confident in himself.”

Respondents also shared that in the future without their stated challenge or barrier, **they (as parents) would be serving as support in their children’s learning**. Parents described the importance of role modeling for their children, as well as tangibly being able to provide resources to their kids. As one parent shared, “I’m trying to get back in school...and trying to run my own business. I want to get myself in the position to get my kids what they want and need...So they can see that my mom has done hard work and so they can do hard work and get what they want and need [in the future].” Other respondents stated the necessity of complementing academic learning from school with learning at home. Multiple parents shared their different methodologies to engage their children, from making up songs, reading together, conducting scientific experiments, doing extra workbooks and other activities. One parent said,

In my personal opinion, I do not just rely on [my daughter’s] teacher or her school. There are summer camps, books [and] workbooks...Even before [my daughter] started first grade, in the last few weeks of kindergarten, she was working [and reading] a first grade book...If a parent only relies on the school system, the child might fail. There will be gaps in a child’s educational journey.

Impact on Education System

Parents were then asked to imagine what would be different or better in the *education system* if the challenges, barriers or problems they had shared earlier no longer existed in the future. All Spanish-speaking parents provided responses to this question, while only a quarter of English-speaking parents did so. Responses to this question varied greatly between Spanish-

and English-speaking parents. Clear themes emerged among responses from Spanish-speaking parents, while the number of responses from English-speaking parents was too low to truly coalesce into additional themes. However, some of the responses from English-speaking parents overlapped with Spanish-speaking parent responses.

The key theme that emerged from Spanish-speaking parents was that there would be **more accessible and understandable resources for parents to navigate the educational system**. All Spanish-speaking respondents shared this hope in their responses. As one parent stated, “Communicating the rules to immigrants and communicating the types of help that are out there for newcomers [would be better]...There are plenty of resources for immigrants, but they don’t promote them enough in our language.” An English-speaking respondent said there is a clear need for parent resources from trusted experts, instead of people outside the education system. As this parent shared,

Just because emails have links [to resources] doesn’t mean [a parent will] click on it. We need more family and parent resource offices. There are no resources for you [as a parent] to go to because the expectation is for you to know everything. We need to provide a place where people can go...

An additional theme among Spanish-speaking parents’ responses was their vision for educational systems and schools with **greater discipline, security and safety** in the future. Parents cited concerns about mass gun shootings across the country, as well as school bullying. One parent said that the frequency of these incidents in schools “is bad for kids’ mental health...It affects them psychologically.” Another parent shared their desire for stricter discipline, citing concerns of bullying. As this parent described,

There are too many students [in MNPS], and it is hard to see when there is bullying...When [my] daughter was in early elementary, she was bullied and the principal [and] the teacher didn’t do anything about it. She didn’t want to go to school. Seeing more security measures in the schools will be a good change.

Among all parents who provided responses to this question (English- and Spanish-speaking parents), one theme appeared: the hope for **more supportive, compassionate teacher engagement with students and parents**. In particular, parents hoped for teachers that communicated with them about their children’s learning on a regular basis, as well as stopping and preventing any bullying and harassment their children experienced in school.

Interestingly, 36 percent of all respondents did not name a barrier or challenge they had dealt with in their children’s education. Therefore, the questions were reframed for those respondents to share their vision for their family and their children’s future, including their vision for their children’s education. However, as a result of these reframed questions, some of respondents’

answers mimicked their responses to questions on their hopes and vision of success for their children's futures.

Additional Thoughts and Comments

Parents were given an opportunity to share additional, final comments to the interviewers. These respondents shared a variety of responses and insights.

One parent described how children experience **school burnout and disengagement**, due to the length of school days and the chaotic environment in public schools. Another parent discussed how the **education system serves as childcare** for many families, as evidenced during the height of COVID-19. A different parent shared how Tennessee has **lower educational standards** as compared to other states, making Tennessee unappealing to move to from other states. Also, children who have been educated in other states with higher educational standards may come to Tennessee schools and become bored, restless and disengaged. Another parent shared the need to **provide better quality and healthier foods** to children during the school day.

One parent described the need for **making schools "kid-friendly."** As the parent said, "Schools should be by default kid-friendly, but we got to work with what we have." The parent provided ideas on creating "kid-friendly" trainings and certifications to create a new culture of supporting children. As stated by this parent, "The only way we can change the system [is to have] something created that takes the focus away from what makes the adults happy and successful to what makes kids happy and successful."

KEY TAKEAWAYS

A large number of themes emerged from the individual parent interviews. Several conclusions can be made based on these themes.

- **The concept of the "early childhood education system" is challenging for many parents to grapple with on their own.** Although parents are constantly engaging with "the system," the idea of "the education system" is too broad, theoretical and academic for many parents at this point in time. Parents hold critical knowledge and experiences that can transform the education system. Work needs to be done to ensure parents are able to share their expertise to create change.
- **Parents recognize the need for their children to access quality education to reach their goals, but many barriers exist in obtaining said "quality" education.** Although "quality" education was never explicitly defined in the interviews (either by the interviewers or interviewees), a general definition could be pieced together from the parent responses throughout the interview process. Based on the interviews, "quality" education consists of schools and daycares that provide academic rigor and support, social and emotional

support, access to opportunities for future success, and parent communication and connection, at a bare minimum. Many parents stated that although “quality” schools and daycares existed in Middle Tennessee, they were inaccessible, often due to cost and/or distance.

- **Individual, institutional and systemic barriers need to be addressed to ensure families and children are supported and thriving.** Families are dealing with a host of systemic barriers inside and outside the education system, including but not limited to poverty, transportation challenges, high housing costs, confusing immigration processes, and many other challenges. These systems often feel overwhelming and the barriers feel insurmountable. Although large-scale systems change efforts are occurring within these sectors in Davidson County, it is clear that without addressing these other systems, parents and families will continue to struggle, even as the early childhood education seeks to change.
- **Parental engagement in their children’s learning is critical in addressing early childhood education and should be supported by the early childhood system.** Respondents clearly indicated the importance of providing additional support and resources to bolster and advance their children’s education. Parents shared a variety of methods and strategies to academically engage with their children at home. However, barriers exist in what parents are able to offer and do. Time and cost constraints, as well as language and cultural barriers make it challenging for parents to offer the support they believe their children need to succeed.
- **School structures and environments are critical in setting up children for success.** Schools can provide encouragement, rigor and support to ensure students will thrive. However, as described by many parents, the daycares and schools their children currently attend or have attended in the past have lacked supportive environments, including a lack of teacher and school administration engagement and care. Instead, their children have experienced disengagement, academic struggles and harm from the existing environments their children exist in.
- **Delay, disconnection and lack of resources is the major challenge that parents and children face in navigating the early childhood education system.** If resources do exist, they are neither sufficient nor efficiently deployed to children that require them. Also, many of these resources do not meet the needs of families experiencing cultural and language barriers, particularly Spanish-speaking families. Ultimately, parents are often forced to navigate the system with limited knowledge, running into multiple obstacles and attempting to address issues on their own.
- **Daycares are inaccessible and expensive for families.** The long waiting lists for daycares in Middle Tennessee, along with the high costs, make daycare a major challenge for parents to navigate. For several parents, lack of daycare due to being on a waiting list impacted their careers. Also, there is a lack of clarity on how and who is able to access financial support for daycare. Ultimately, many parents feel stuck by putting their children into a daycare they can afford but one they do not believe is “quality.”

- **A lack of individualized student support is a major issue that negatively impacts children.** Many parents shared that their children were academically, emotionally and/or socially held back due to various rules, processes and practices that their children's schools enforced. Respondents sought more individualized and targeted support for their children, which was often not found in their children's current schools and daycares.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the above conclusions, several recommendations can be made to improve Raising Readers Nashville's implementation strategies and overall plan.

- **Popular education strategies are needed to help parents connect their own personal experiences with the larger structures and institutions making up the early childhood education system.** Without parent and family involvement in Raising Readers Nashville's efforts, the work will not be sustainable or impactful. It is critical to meet parents where they are at and ensure they can be engaged in the systems change work that Raising Readers Nashville is leading. Popular education is a methodology to ensure the impacted communities are the people leading change. By using this framework in Raising Readers Nashville's work, parents will become an even greater force for systems change in Middle Tennessee.
- **Additional and more robust research is needed to better understand parents' perspectives, experiences and attitudes regarding early childhood education in Middle Tennessee.** Although engaging parents for Raising Readers Nashville's implementation planning process through interviews and focus groups is useful, this effort is not enough to make generalizations around parents' experiences with the education system. Ultimately, more intensive research efforts are needed to ensure Raising Readers Nashville's strategies are aligned with the needs articulated by parents and children most impacted by inequities. Critically, these future research efforts must be grounded in community and equity, ideally co-designed and led by parents involved with Raising Readers Nashville's work.
- **Raising Readers Nashville's work should be parent-guided/led, particularly by parents most impacted by educational inequities.** To do so, community engagement needs to be a central component of Raising Readers Nashville's efforts beyond the current planning process. Specific demographics, such as Black/African American, Latinx/Hispanic and Kurdish parents should be engaged more deeply. Shifting Raising Readers Nashville's practices and processes, including changing meeting times, internal structures and communication opportunities, is key to involve more parents in the collaborative's work. By being parent-guided, Raising Readers Nashville's efforts will be more impactful and intentional.
- **Early childhood education institutions, including daycares and schools, should communicate and engage with parents more regularly and intentionally.** Parents recognize the importance of their involvement in their children's education. However,

many respondents shared their frustrations with the lack of parental support in their children's schools. By ensuring parents feel supported by the early childhood education system, they will be more able to support their children in their education journeys.

- **Schools and daycares should shift practices, programming and policies to create more supportive structures and environments for students and their families.** These structures and environments could shift in various ways to become more supportive, but restructuring efforts should consider equitable and trauma-informed practices. Also, these efforts should be based on what parents and children seek and need.
- **Resources should be easily accessible and provided without delays to families and children who need them.** Also, any silos between organizations that provide resources should be eliminated to ensure families are effectively and adequately connected to the services they require. Critically, **resources should be culturally and linguistically-responsive to all families with children in the early childhood education system.**
- **Daycares should be accessible, low-cost and equitable.** The high cost of daycares, as well as the long waiting lists, make daycare incredibly inaccessible for many families and parents. In particular, women and single parents are disproportionately harmed by a lack of daycare opportunities, impacting their careers and personal financial futures. Finding strategies to make daycares more accessible and equitable is key to improving educational outcomes in Middle Tennessee.
- **Targeted and individualized student support should be provided to all students, particularly those students from marginalized communities.** All children are unique in their strengths and challenges; by treating all students the exact same ("equality" approach), many children will struggle, fall behind and/or not have their needs met. By applying an equity approach to student support, children who are most disproportionately impacted by inequities will be supported more intentionally and with the proper environments, structures and resources.

APPENDICES

English Interview Guide

Raising Readers Nashville Parent Journey Mapping Script

Parent Name:

Interview Date:

Interviewed by:

Address:

Thank you for your time today! We will be talking to you about the ways education happens for children from the time they are born until at least 8 years old. We want to learn more about you, your family and your child(ren)'s experiences in the education system. When we use the words "education system," we are referring to ways your child is supported in learning outside the home. This includes day care, preschool, and formal education K-12.

1. I would like to start by hearing your story. How many children do you have and what grades are they currently in?
 - a. Do they attend school?
 - b. If so, what type of school do they attend (pre-K, daycare, and other places where your child may go for education before the age of 5 years old AND any formal education institutions, like Metro Nashville Public Schools (MNPS), private schools, charter schools, religious-based schools, Montessories, and others)?
 - c. If none of these, we still want to hear your story and experiences.

2. What does success look like for your child(ren)'s education?
 - a. What do you hope for for them?

3. What is currently working well for your child(ren)'s education?
4. Have you [or your child(ren)] experienced any barriers or problems with your child(ren) reaching their goals?
 - a. If so, what have you experienced?
5. Let's imagine a future state where [X – their specific problem and/or community level problem] is solved, what could be different for you?
 - a. What could it look like for your family and/or your child[ren]?
 - b. What could be different about the education system in 10 years if this problem is solved? / What do you think should be better in 10 years?
6. Is there anything else you would like to share at this time?

Spanish Interview Guide

Guía de Preguntas para la Experiencia Educativa de Padres de Familia (Raising Readers Nashville)

Nombre del Padre/Madre o Tutor:

Fecha de la Entrevista:

Entrevistado por:

Dirección:

¡Muchas gracias por su tiempo! Hoy hablaremos de las distintas formas en las que la educación ocurre en los niños desde el momento en que nacen hasta al menos los 8 años de edad. Nos gustaría saber más de usted, su familia y de las experiencias con sus hijos en el sistema educativo. Cuando usamos las palabras “sistema educativo”, nos referimos a las formas en las que su hijo/a es apoyado al aprender fuera del hogar. Esto incluye jardín infantil, educación preescolar y educación formal desde el kínder hasta el grado 12.

1. Me gustaría comenzar por escuchar su historia. ¿Cuántos hijos tiene y en que grados se encuentran?
 - a. ¿Van a la escuela?
 - b. Si es así, ¿a qué tipo de escuela asisten? (preescolar, jardín infantil o cualquier otro lugar donde el niño/a se haya educado antes de los 5 años de edad. También puede incluir cualquier institución educativa formal como las Escuelas Públicas de Metro Nashville (MNPS), escuelas privadas, escuelas autónomas, escuelas con base religiosa, escuelas Montessori, u otras entidades).
 - c. Si no ha asistido a ninguna de estas instituciones mencionadas arriba, de igual manera nos gustaría escuchar su historia y experiencias.

2. ¿Cómo define el éxito en la educación de sus hijos?
 - a. ¿Cuál es su esperanza para ellos?

3. ¿En este momento, qué le parece que está funcionando bien en la educación de sus hijos?

4. ¿Sus hijos han experimentado algún tipo de obstáculos o problemas al tratar de alcanzar sus metas?
 - a. Si es así, ¿Qué han experimentado?

5. Imaginémonos un futuro en donde sus problemas específicos y/o los problemas a nivel de la comunidad se han resuelto, ¿qué le gustaría que fuera diferente?
 - a. ¿Cómo afectaría a su familia y a sus hijos?
 - b. ¿Qué podría ser distinto en el sistema educativo en 10 años si se resolviera este problema? / ¿Que piensa que debería ser mejor en 10 años?

6. ¿Hay algo más que le gustaría compartir en este momento?



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