



Working together to improve early childhood development outcomes by strengthening connections for families

DATA COLLECTION

A wide range of community voices were gathered via:

- Surveys
- Focus Groups
- Interviews
- Service Provider engagement
- EDI Data review (HELP)
- Strengthening Transitions to Kindergarten (SEY2K) SD survey

KEY SOCIOECONOMIC & GEOGRAPHIC INFLUENCES

Key community characteristics impacting families are:

- Rapidly gentrified community
- Very high housing costs and high cost of living
- Young population with many new families
- Lack of certain direct services in the Village, including health care
- Some families experience food insecurity

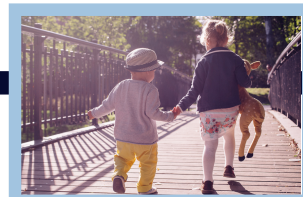


Parenting Challenges

- A lot of newcomers and parents lacking family supports and/or supportive friendships
- Concerns over child development, separation anxiety and lack of socialization
- Lack of parent awareness of resources and supports and/or how to access them
- Parent stress levels are high and parents indicate needs for respite and more support
- Isolation during Covid and resulting inconsistency in program delivery and participation

Community Strengths

- Identified cohesion in communities; often noted as connected, vibrant & welcoming
- Many families in Cumberland with safe neighbourhoods for children to play
- Strong range of early years community programs and offerings
- Great accessibility to nature, outdoor play and community infrastructure
- Informal social groups and connections often form organically
- Responsive Village government and great community events



PARENT & COMMUNITY VOICES

There is lack of knowledge and access to support programs and resources

We need more programs for under 3's & more inclusive programming

We need to support families in emerging from Covid and reconnecting each other and accessing supports

My child hasn't learned social cues or about routines and structures to prepare for school

I don't know how or where to get information or support for parenting

There is so much to do in Cumberland!

I feel very connected here. I am close with my neighbours and the kids are always playing in the neighbourhood

I see an overwhelming number of other parents suffering from anxiety and depression and some are disengaged and fearful

I don't have any extended family here or people to lean on

There is a lot of childhood anxiety in the kindergarten classrooms

PARENT VISIONING: THEMES

HEALTHY CHILDREN, CONNECTED FAMILIES

Parents have supports and deeper connections to manage stress and improve wellbeing

Families are accessing services supports and resources to understand & meet their child's needs

The welcoming and vibrant characteristics of Cumberland expand to all families in an inclusive and engaging way

Children are socially comfortable and confident with tools to manage anxiety and healthy child development

PARENT VISIONING: IDEAS

Offer more diverse and inclusive opportunities for families to connect and children to play and develop

Host an open house series for families to network & access resources and services

Create a Family navigator role to build support and connections for families and connection w/ community partners & initiatives

Establish a communication tool to connect families and coordinate meet ups

Develop an awareness & outreach campaign to reconnect parents as we emerge from Covid

Create safe & covered outdoor early childhood play and gathering spaces

Identify indoor meetup spaces for parents to gather and socialize (days and evenings)

Participate in the newly proposed Community Health Care centre advocate and partner for EY supports

Encourage & support self-starting moms to create informal networks and peer interactions

NEXT STEPS

1. Host a meeting with parents to review the ideas above. Identify gaps, prioritize choices and expand upon proposed ideas
2. Continue to attend community meetings and explore partnerships and existing initiatives
3. Host a community meeting to review and discuss innovation ideas and assess for feasibility & viability. Select top 1 or 2 choices
4. Develop an innovation plan and begin steps to implement it





Working together to improve early childhood development outcomes by strengthening connections for families

DATA COLLECTION

A wide range of community voices were gathered via:

- Surveys
- Focus Groups
- Conversation Circles
- Interviews
- Service Provider engagement
- EDI Data review (HELP)

KEY SOCIOECONOMIC & GEOGRAPHIC INFLUENCES

Key community characteristics impacting families are:

- Very high housing costs and housing insecurity
- Neighbours are far apart and there are few places to bring people together
- Drive to town is far and difficult to do
- More families are moving to the area

Parenting Challenges

- Concerns regarding child development and lack of social skill development for children
- Isolation and the geographic challenges of having to access everything in town
- Lack of programs and services opportunities to connect within the rural area
- Parent stress and concerns about parent mental health and lack of friendships and social support

Community Strengths

- Existing community halls in FB/UB and Royston offer potential for connections
- Strongstart and FB Parent and Tot groups are popular programs and good resources for parents
- Residents enjoy small neighbourhood gatherings and community events
- Families are excited about the new playground at Fanny Bay Hall
- Families utilize parks for informal meet-ups



PARENT & COMMUNITY VOICES

We hardly know anybody here. Not out of lack of trying. There are no opportunities.

We met a lot of people through FB Tots - that was a lifeline for a lot of families.

We are getting a new park at FBH- this is an opportunity for park play/pop ups!

My child has attachment struggles because he doesn't have social opportunities.

I am constantly worrying about my child's mental health.

Having a group of parents willing to listen and share would be really helpful.

It would be helpful to have someone like a Facilitator to turn to when things are difficult.

We need opportunities for kids to interact, and parents need to have those connections and understand everyone has similar struggles.

PARENT VISIONING: THEMES



PARENT VISIONING: IDEAS

- Focus on creating a gathering space for families in the centre of Union Bay
- Host an open house series for families to network & access resources and services
- Hire a family connector or EY advocate/representative to help connect families and improve EY opportunities and supports
- Establish a Block Party series to build neighbourhood connections and support
- Increase options for outdoor community spaces/ playgrounds to meet and connect
- More drop-in & informal EY programs/ StrongStart days
- Connect with grandmothers and explore options to develop intergenerational supports
- More advocacy and representation on Community Centre boards to create more opportunities for families
- Organizations should consider bringing more recreation, school district, and social service supports to the area

NEXT STEPS

- 1) Finalize a list of innovation ideas (UB area focus is recommended).
- 2) Present it to parents that participated and other parents who expressed interest for feedback and ranking.
- 3) Take results back to a working group to assess viability and feasibility of the top selections.
- 4) Choose a top innovation and develop a plan.





Working together to improve early childhood development outcomes by strengthening connections for families

DATA COLLECTION

A wide range of community voices were gathered via:

- Surveys
- Interviews
- Focus Groups
- Service Provider engagement
- EDI Data review (HELP)

SOCIOECONOMIC & GEOGRAPHIC INFLUENCES

Key community characteristics impacting families are:

- Significant housing insecurity and influences of poverty
- Dynamic population shifts with many new families coming but others forced to leave
- Experiences of isolation
- Expensive and challenging to go off island



Parenting Challenges

- Lack of deeper friendships for parents and opportunities to develop peer supports
- Concerns over child development, separation anxiety and lack of socialization
- Parent stress levels are high and parents indicate needs for respite, support and more parenting tools
- Isolation during Covid and resulting inconsistency in program delivery and attendance

Community Strengths

- Identified cohesion in communities, often noted as warm & welcoming
- Strong network of community resources, services and programs
- Good preschool/daycares and community schools on each Island
- Strong network of seniors and intergenerational possibilities
- Existence of community spaces, activity centres etc.
- History of highly valued community events (pre-Covid)



PARENT & COMMUNITY VOICES

The daycares are positive for child dev't and serve as community hubs

Life is stressful and it is difficult to regulate emotions and find time for self care

My child has no friends and doesn't know how to play with other children

Emotional thriving of parent and child are the same—it's hard without enough support

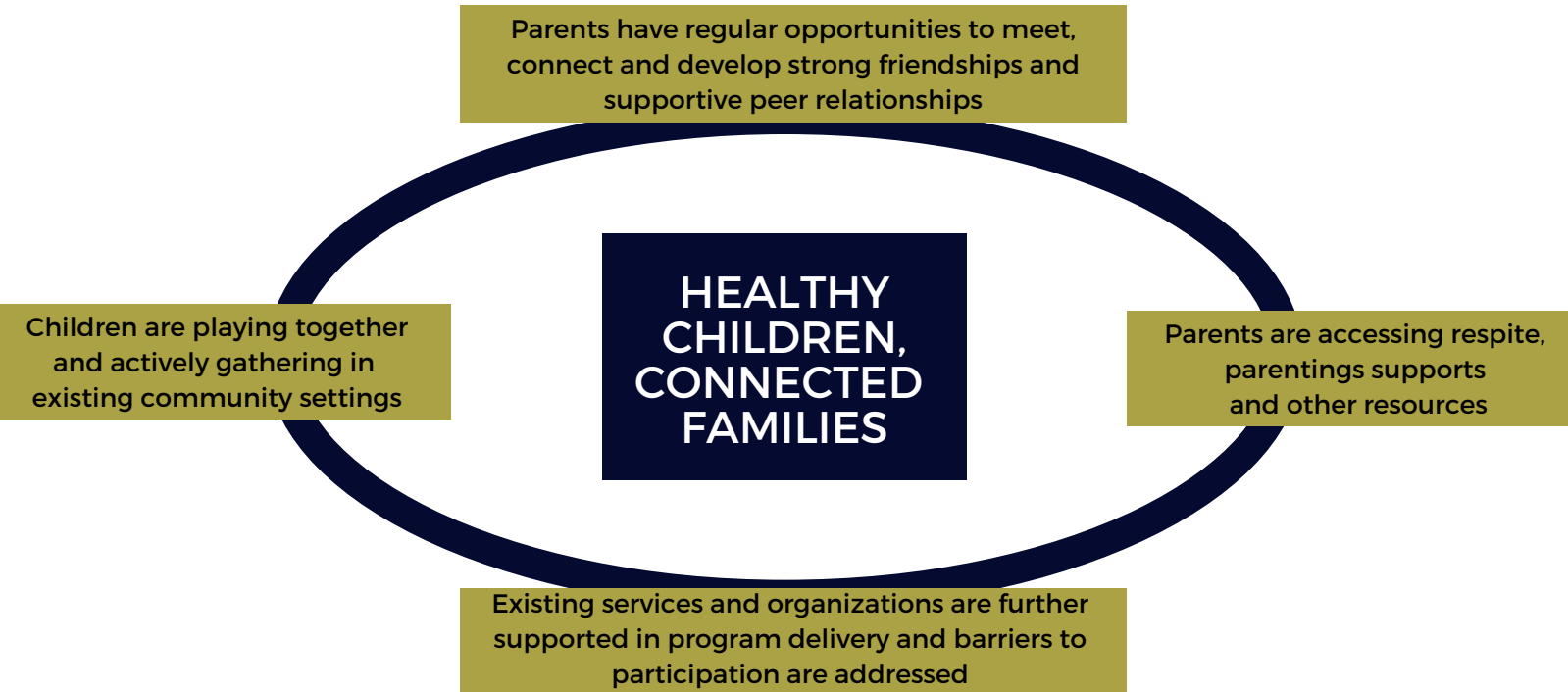
We need weekend activity options, programs geared for dads and more classes and options on Island

We have several programs and services for families on the Islands - perhaps we need to better support what already exists

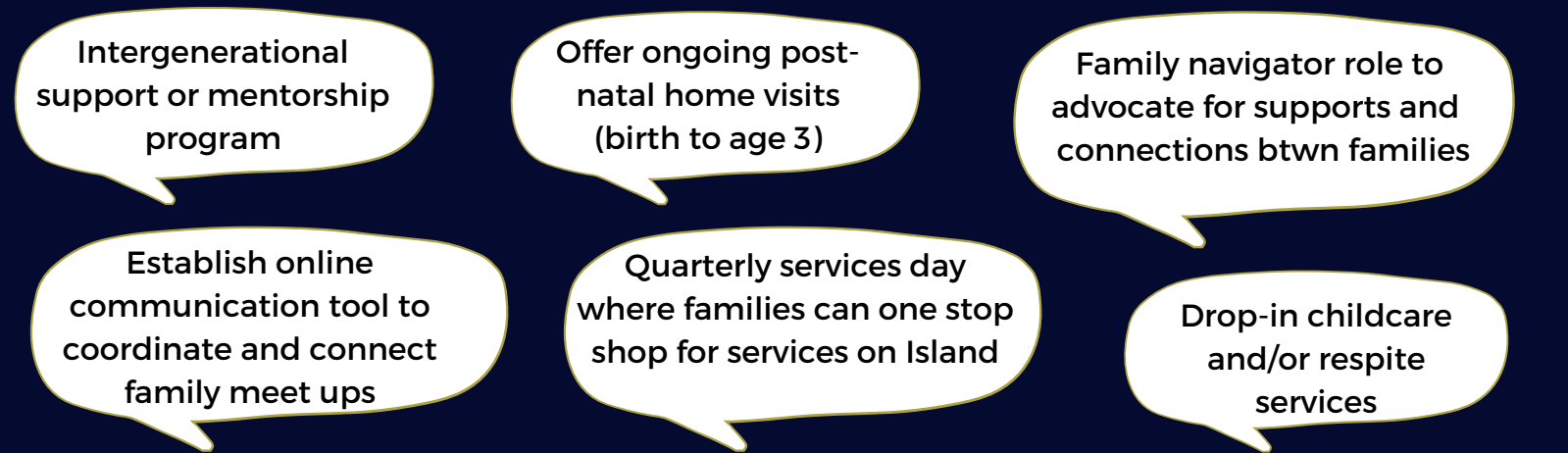
It's friendly here but really hard to make deeper connections and supportive friendships

We had great community events and gatherings prior to Covid

PARENT VISIONING: THEMES



PARENT VISIONING: IDEAS



SUMMARY

Denman and Hornby Island demonstrate strong community capacity to support early years families. This capacity is evident in how existing challenges are addressed and how existing supports and services collaborate to create opportunities for families. The communities have built a foundation on which to address the challenges identified by parents. There is always more to be done and parents have also given some ideas to keep building capacity to support them. Overall, Denman and Hornby are great examples of communities that create an environment for healthy children and connected families.

