



YEAR 4 REPORT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Our work, which commenced in 2019, aimed to facilitate access to childcare for children from first-generation immigrant and refugee families. However, the onset of the pandemic brought about a shift towards online childcare access. As a response to the changing circumstances, we initiated tutoring sessions to assist families in utilizing the distributed technology effectively. In year four of our project, we developed a comprehensive toolkit, ensuring frontline staff and families had access to vital resources for childcare access within our community. Furthermore, we identified the need to fill resource gaps by focusing on digital safety and moderation for children. To maximize the impact of our efforts, we engaged researchers to share our work with a wider audience.

Throughout the project, we have encountered three primary barriers that continue to persist: transportation, finances, and language. The family interviews through WFS have spurred focus groups by C2C to generate potential changes to the childcare system in Rochester. These focus groups have revealed that families often have to make significant concessions and compromises while selecting childcare providers due to their limited options. The necessity of using providers that accept CCAP (Child Care Assistance Program) or offer transportation, two of the top three barriers, often restricts families to center-based care. Unfortunately, these centers typically lack extended hours and lack cultural-specific programming.



YEAR 4 REPORT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY CONT.

Additionally, the closure of a number of specific centers (several Somali providers, a center with extended hours, and a childcare center that ran concurrent with adult education) that previously supported first-generation families has further exacerbated the situation. There is a notable absence of home-based centers that can address both financial constraints and transportation challenges. Access to care alternatives (such as those listed above) is limited and becoming more limited due to closures. This has created an ecosystem that prevents families from pursuing the dual goals of preparing their children for kindergarten in a supported environment while also supporting their children in shoring up their connection to the family's language, culture, and religion prior to kindergarten entry.

Given the identified gaps and challenges, we anticipate focusing our efforts on promoting the proliferation of culturally-specific home-based (or pod-based) childcare centers and/or childcare alternatives such as home visiting or location-specific centers. By doing so, we aim to empower families with more flexible and culturally relevant childcare options.



Our Findings

OVERVIEW

FAMILY SIDE

DESCRIPTION OF FAMILIES

Participants in this study were families in southeast MN who have existing relationships with Intercultural Mutual Assistance Association (IMAA), Listos, and Project FINE. Families engaged with IMAA were specifically engaged in the ParentChild+ program. These participant families had parents who were born outside of the United States and/or moved to the United States within the last five years, and have at least one child under the age of five.

FAMILY INTERVIEWS

Surveys for this study were based on themes found in survey data collected in 2020. The previous surveys were conversation-based interviews using primarily open-ended questions. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic and varying definitions of pre-school, school, and early childhood education, researchers found gaps in the data. This led to researchers developing more specific research questions to better capture demographics, barriers impacting a child's access to childcare, and needs within this community. Additionally, researchers noted that the 2020 survey data made it difficult to determine differences between children within a family. This led to a change in survey process, to better identify each child within the participating families.

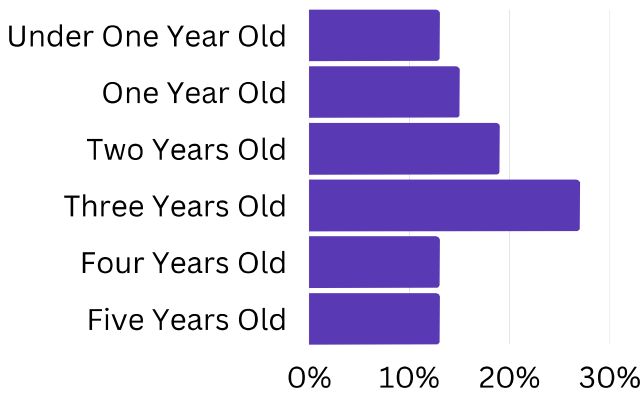
Interviewers also reported preferences for having multiple choice questions rather than open-ended questions to ensure parents' understanding. The survey was drafted and then reviewed by interviewers. Interviewers provided feedback on survey questions and the surveys were updated. The surveys were then piloted with 2 families at Project FINE and 2 at Intercultural Mutual Assistance Association, with the families and interviewers providing feedback on survey structure and question clarity. The survey then went through a final editing process to incorporate the received feedback.

While bilingual staff completed the interviews with families in their preferred language, the responses were recorded in English.

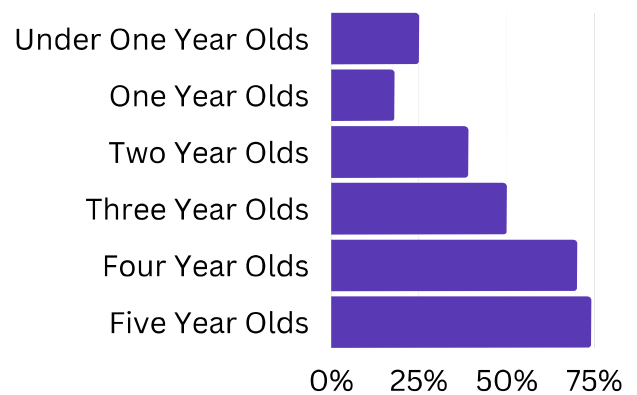
DEMOGRAPHICS (INTERVIEWEES)

Of the 100 families interviewed, there were 149 children under the age of 6. Of these children, 68 (46%) were currently or previously in a formal care setting.

AGE OF CHILDREN

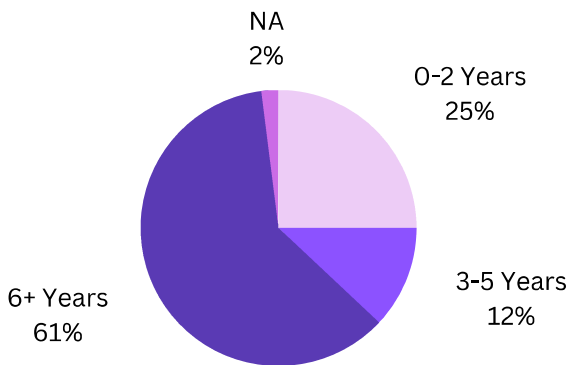


CURRENTLY OR PREVIOUSLY IN FORMAL CARE

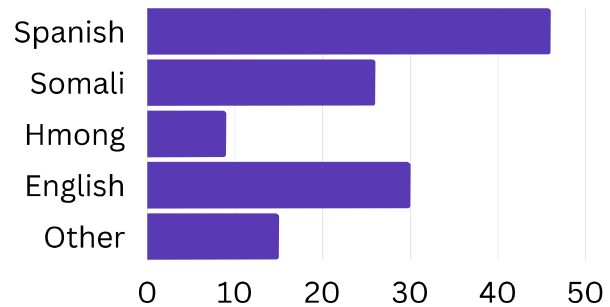


It is important to contextualize this data in terms of the demographics of the families being interviewed. All families self-identified as immigrants or refugees, primarily from the Somali and Hispanic communities. Some families were in Winona County and some were in Olmsted County.

DURATION IN THE US



LANGUAGES (MANY FAMILIES USE MULTIPLE LANGUAGES IN THE HOUSEHOLD)

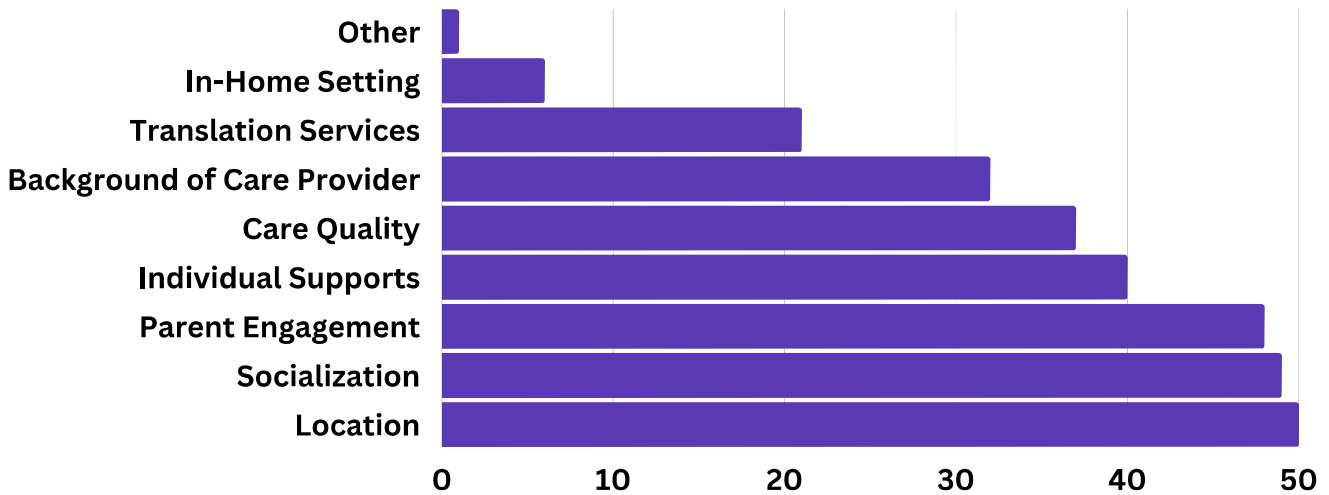


Most notably, all families interviewed consisted of a married couple with their own children (although some included additional family members such as aunts/uncles and grandparents), and 67% had someone home full-time. The majority of whom were who identified as 'homemaker'. This likely has a large impact on families' care preferences and feasible options.

FAMILY CARE PREFERENCES

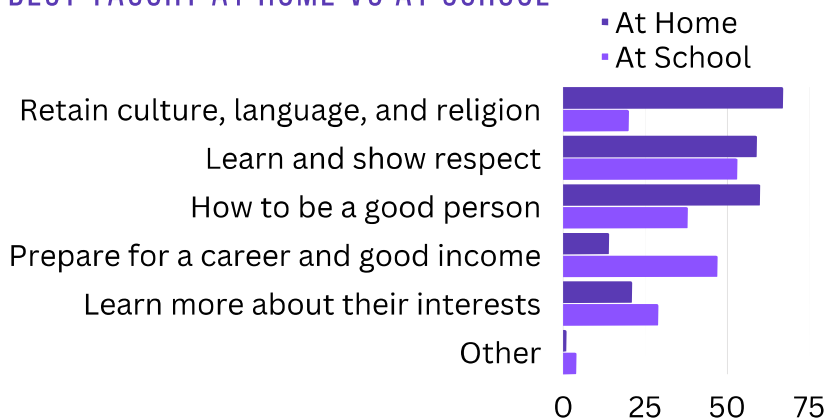
On the whole, parents whose children were enrolled in formal care (whether in-home or center-based) were satisfied with their relationship to the provider. Parents of three-year-old children were the only age group to have any respondents state that they were 'neutral' or 'dissatisfied' with the relationship between them and their child's care provider.

WHAT'S IMPORTANT TO YOU WHEN SELECTING A PROVIDER?



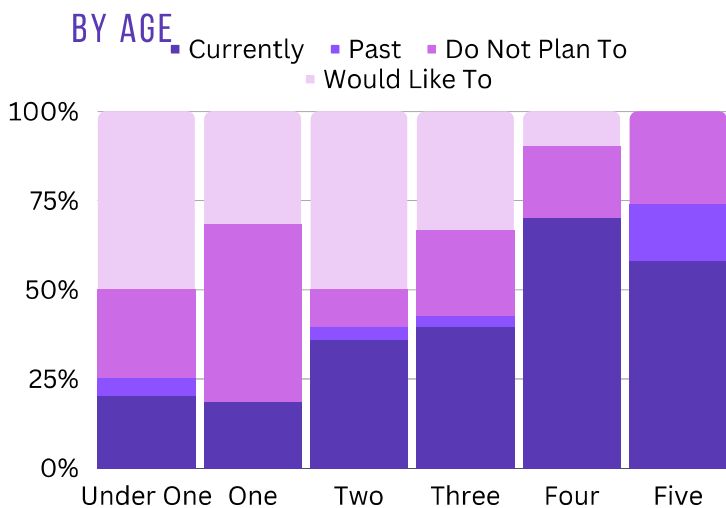
Location, socialization opportunities for their children, and how the provider engages parents in their children's learning were the top three priorities. From these findings, Cradle 2 Career has held a series of co-design conversations with parents to learn more. From these conversations, parents have shared that location/transportation and financial considerations are the top two factors in selecting a care provider, but that families often feel like they are settling on other aspects that are important to them - in particular, the background of their care provider and the setting of their care.

BEST TAUGHT AT HOME VS AT SCHOOL



The themes to the left were generated in 2020 in response to the question "what is most important for your child to learn as they grow into an adult. In the 2023 survey, we had parents rank these themes and indicate if they were best learned at home or school. 31% of parents said that learning to be a good person and 34% said retaining their culture, language, and religion are the most important for their child growing into an adult

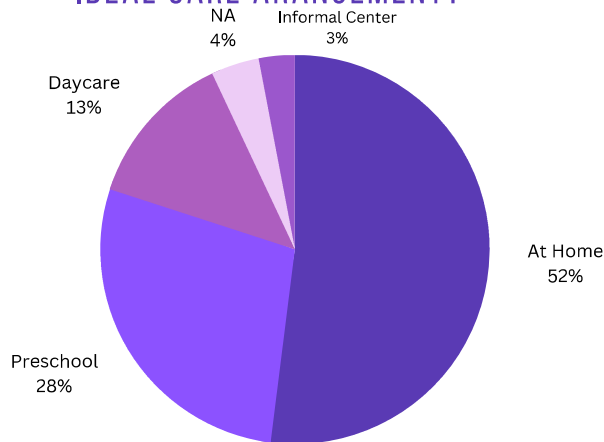
CARE ARRANGEMENTS- BY CHILD NOT HOUSEHOLD



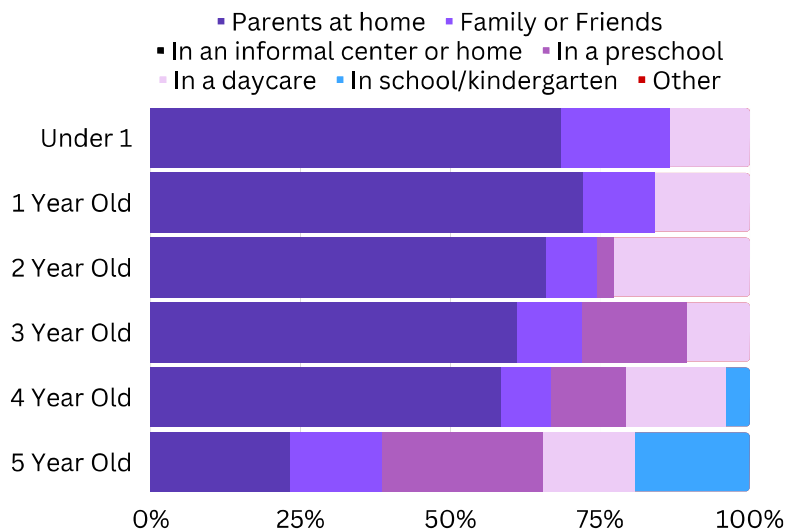
Children are more likely to attend formal childcare as they grow older. The percentage of parents who state they do not plan to enroll their children in formal childcare stays relatively consistent, with about 25% of parents interviewed stating that they had no plans to use formal childcare options.

Approximately half of parents interviewed stated that the ideal care arrangement for their children is at home with a parent. At the same time, many employers view childcare availability as being one of the keys that enable parents to return to the workforce after the birth of the child. It seems that a return to the workforce may in many cases be due to economic necessity rather than personal preference.

IDEAL CARE ARRANGEMENT?



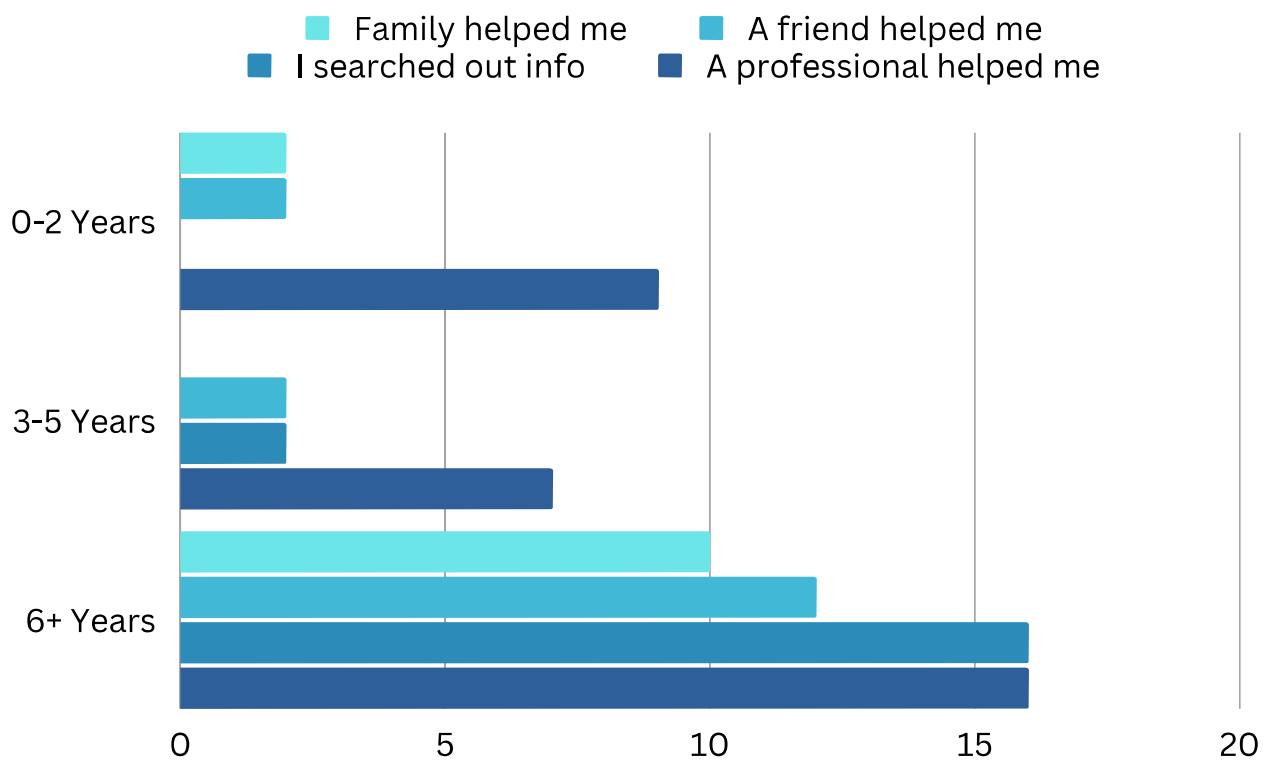
CURRENT CARE ARRANGEMENT?



As children age, they are less likely to be cared for by their parents and are more likely to enter formal childcare settings. The percentage of children who attend daycare remains relatively consistent across ages, while more children enter center-based care at 3 years old.

HOW PARENTS LEARNED TO ENROLL IN FORMAL CARE

Immigrant and refugee parents have mostly used a professional to help them learn to enroll in childcare. Families who have been in the United States for less than five years reported they rely more on professionals for support due to having a smaller social network. Those who have been in the United States for 6+ years were split between using their social networks to learn by enrollment and relying on professionals.

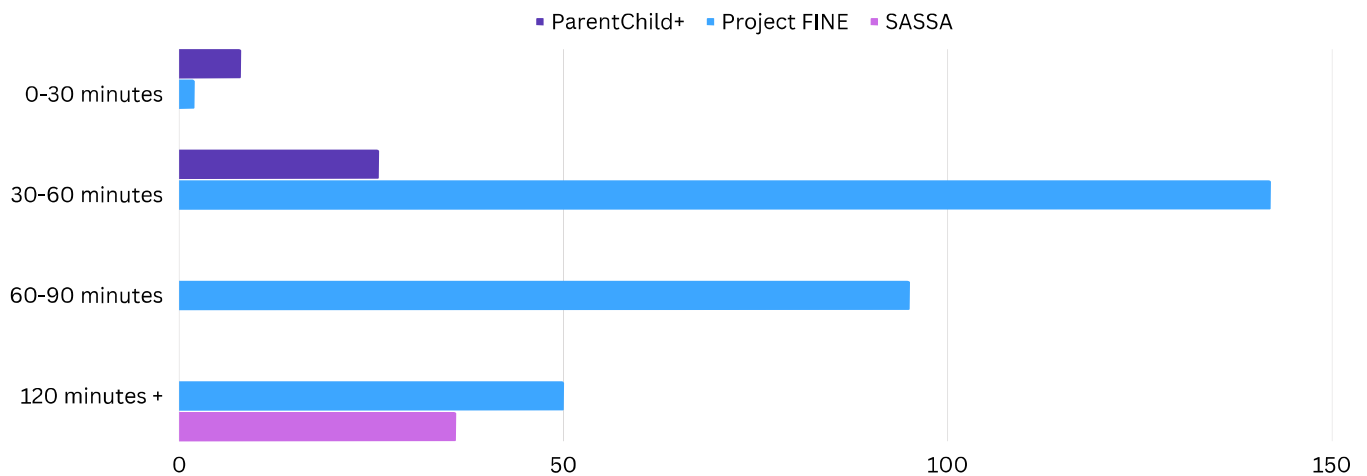


This data highlights that regardless of the length of time refugees and immigrants have spent in the United States, they tend to rely on professionals as opposed to other options when seeking information about child care.

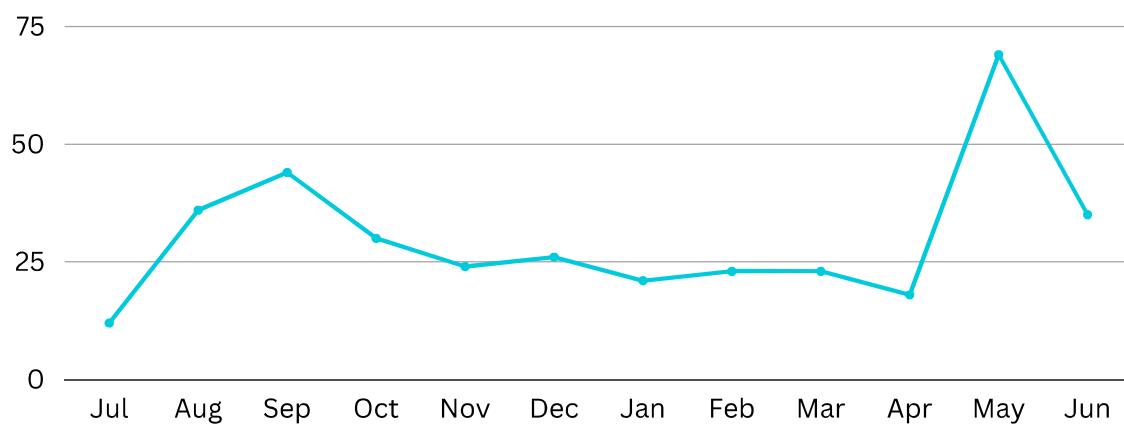
YEAR 2 TECHNOLOGY TUTORING ATTENDANCE

Year 2 started with SASSA and Project Fine each providing approximately 30 hours of tutoring to families per month. SASSA provided 2-hour group sessions while Project Fine provided individual sessions ranging from 30 to 120 minutes. Due to limited capacity, SASSA ended their partnership with us in November 2022 and we brought on IMAA's ParentChild+ staff as a WFS implementation partner as they are already connected to families with children under 5 that are in need of the resources.

YEAR 2 LENGTH OF MEETINGS



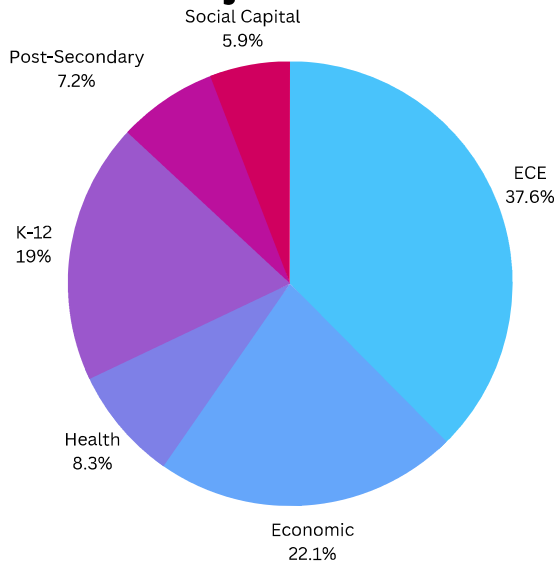
YEAR 2 NUMBER OF MEETINGS BY MONTH



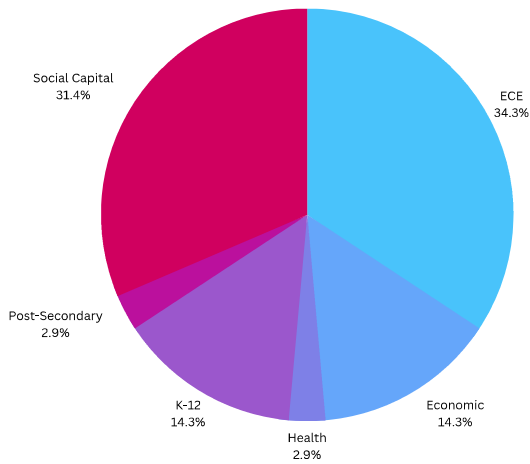
The number of meetings per month ebbs and flows with the academic year, with an increase in August and September as school starts up and another in May as the school year comes to a close.

Families worked with their tutor to identify their goals. The tutor would assign the goal to one of the six key components of well-being established by the Aspen Institute. The tutors were given the list of goals found on the next page.

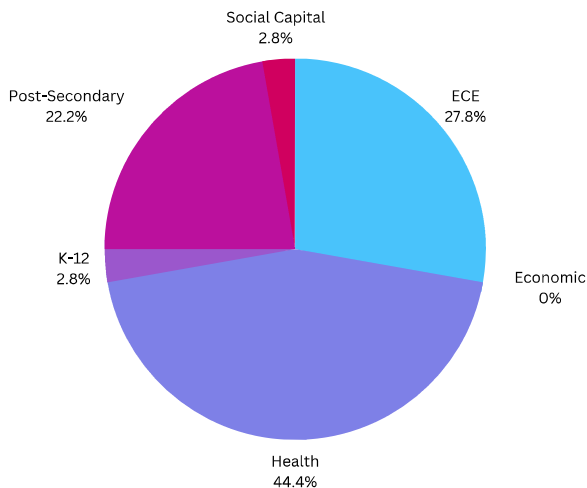
ProjectFINE



ParentChild+



SASSA



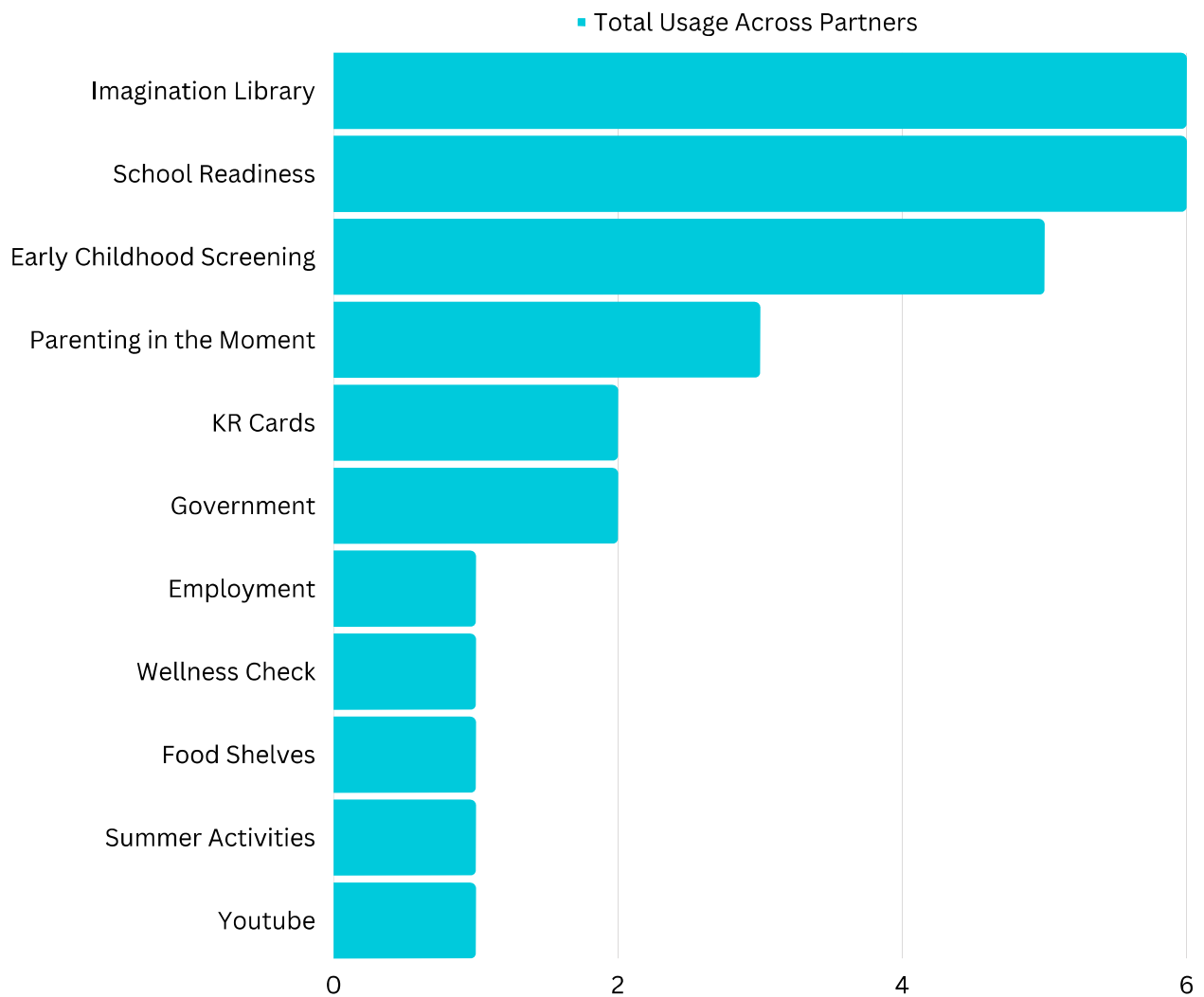
YEAR 2 GOAL AREAS

Similar to the previous year, early childhood education (ECE) was the top goal area for Project Fine and ParentChild+.

Goals within this domain were wide-ranging and many used tools from our toolkit - such as Imagination Library, information about Early Childhood Screening, and receiving information about the School Readiness program. Other goals centered around accessing video resources on specific topics for parents to engage their children's learning - such as alphabet, animals, and songs.

At the close of the second year of technology tutoring, the Core Team developed a toolkit of early childhood resources for parents to access with front-line staff. This was in response to early childhood education being the top goal area for families, and feedback from front-line staff that they desired concrete tools and activities to engage families in.

YEAR 2 TOOLKIT USAGE



THE PRIMARY TOOLS USED IN THE TOOLKIT WERE IMAGINATION LIBRARY, SCHOOL READINESS, EARLY CHILDHOOD SCREENING, AND PARENTING IN THE MOMENT. 3 OF 4 ARE ONE-TIME EFFORTS TO ENROLL FAMILIES IN ONGOING SUPPORTS, WHILE PARENTING IN THE MOMENT IS AN ONLINE CURRICULUM FAMILIES CAN ACCESS AT ANY TIME WITH THEIR DEVICES.



Year Five EVALUATION TEAM RECOMMENDATIONS

ENGAGEMENT OF ECE PARTNERS IN CO-CREATION

To date, the work of the ECE partners and front-line staff has been disconnected to some extent. This was in response to the tremendous demands of the pandemic and the changing mode of learning for children and families. In the year going forward, ECE partners should be engaged in developing a learning prototype that honors the aspirations we've found in our work with families - retaining language, culture, and religion; directly engaging in their children's education by engaging with providers; and facilitating the use of individualized supports. At the same time, the prototype should be aware of barriers that families may face with regards to transportation, finances, and navigating educational systems.

FAMILY CHECK-POINT

It is recommended that a mid-year checkpoint (in February or March) be done with families engaging in the prototype in order to make mid-year adjustments.