

# FAMILY SURVEY REPORT

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 **DEPARTMENT of  
EDUCATION**  
Louisiana Believes

 UNITED WAY'S  
WOMEN'S  
LEADERSHIP  
COUNCIL

**LIVE UNITED**  
  
United Way of  
Southeast Louisiana



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## 2015–2016 LEARNING YEAR

# PRACTICE PERFORMANCE PROFILES: EARLY CHILDHOOD FAMILY SATISFACTION SURVEY REPORT



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### OVERVIEW: BUILDING A UNIQUE PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP WITH UNITED WAY OF SOUTHEAST LOUISIANA TO INCREASE FAMILY ENGAGEMENT IN EARLY CHILDHOOD

In 2015–2016, United Way of Southeast Louisiana Women’s Leadership Council sponsored the first-ever statewide Early Childhood Family Survey in partnership with the Louisiana Department of Education. Through the support of the United Way of Southeast Louisiana Women’s Leadership Council, the Department was able to conduct an online and paper survey of families about their experiences and satisfaction with enrollment and with early childhood programs that serve children from birth to age five. The survey was designed to gain a better understanding of the perspectives of families of young children in Louisiana who participate in publicly-funded early childhood programs. This survey was instrumental in collecting information about family experiences within the newly-unified system of early childhood in Louisiana, and is included on the 2015–2016 Practice Performance Profiles, the result of the new unified quality rating and improvement system.

Highlights of the survey include:

- More than 2,500 Louisiana families participated, including those who have children in child care, Head Start and school-based pre-K.
- Most families are trying to learn more about the options available for their children, and are benefiting from recent efforts to coordinate application processes at the local level.
- 90% of families are likely to choose their program again, and 88% of families are satisfied with the quality of the program their child attends. However, only 55% of families believe their children are learning important skills and less than a third feel fully knowledgeable as to whether their program meets quality benchmarks.
- Many families are finding it easier to apply and access early childhood but questions remain about how to better inform and engage families, especially Louisiana’s most at-risk families.

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### INTRODUCTION: UNIFYING EARLY CHILDHOOD IN LOUISIANA

Louisiana is in a multi-year effort to unify its early childhood system and improve kindergarten readiness. To address a fragmented early childhood system that prepares too few children for kindergarten, Louisiana’s legislature passed the Early Childhood Care and Education Act of 2012. This legislation seeks to have every child in publicly-funded birth to age five programs on track for success in school. The state’s Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) is charged to unify publicly funded preschool, Head Start and child care programs into a statewide early childhood network and to empower families by ensuring easy access to high-quality early learning options for their children.

To implement this law, the Louisiana Department of Education, under the leadership of BESE, established a plan to create local early childhood networks of child care, Head Start, publicly funded private preschools, and public school pre-kindergarten that is unified by early learning and development standards, expectations for adult/child interactions, and enrollment that is easily accessible for families. These local networks are expected to serve all publicly funded at-risk children from birth to age five, implement innovative approaches to increasing the quality of programs, and improve access for families. In 2015-2016, there were 64 community networks in Louisiana, each functioning as a consortium of early learning providers, coordinated by a Lead Agency.



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## **BUILDING A UNIFIED QUALITY RATING AND IMPROVEMENT SYSTEM: 2015–2016 PRACTICE PERFORMANCE PROFILES**

To help ensure children enter kindergarten ready, BESE established a unified statewide early childhood quality rating and improvement system (Bulletin 140: Louisiana Early Childhood Care and Education Network). Through the unified rating and improvement system, all publicly-funded sites and community networks in Louisiana will receive Performance Profiles that includes a rating based on rigorous classroom observations using the CLASS™ system of measures. Performance Profiles also include information on best practices that measure important quality inputs, including use of formative assessment and a high-quality curriculum, the education and certifications of teachers, and program investment in high levels of individual attention for children. These profiles provide families with key information about all sites and community networks serving children through public funds. In 2015–2016, these profiles are practice only, with no stakes or funding decisions attached to the ratings. For more information about the 2015–2016 Practice Performance Profiles, please review the [Practice Performance Profiles FAQs](#).

On the community network profile, informational metrics provide information on the level of satisfaction that families had with the application and enrollment process at the community level and the programs their children attended in the community. Families attending public and nonpublic schools, Head Starts, and child care centers were surveyed. Family satisfaction for these two metrics is rated on a three-level scale: Somewhat, Mostly, and Very.

These measures are based on the statewide family survey conducted in the spring of 2016. Results for the family survey are shown for all families within the community network, but not at the individual site level.



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## **ESTABLISHING A PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN THE LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND UNITED WAY OF SOUTHEAST LOUISIANA WOMEN’S LEADERSHIP COUNCIL**

Recognizing its strengths, deep community commitment and passion for supporting early childhood, the United Way of Southeast Louisiana Women’s Leadership Council was a natural choice when the Department explored partnership options to engage Louisiana families. In late 2015, the Department and United Way of Southeast Louisiana Women’s Leadership Council established an exclusive partnership to develop, conduct and analyze a survey of families who participate in publicly-funded early childhood programs.

United Way of Southeast Louisiana Women’s Leadership Council and the Department worked closely at every step in the process. The Department identified a highly-regarded survey vendor, Louisiana State University, to conduct a statewide survey of a sample of families of children in different types of publicly-funded programs including child care, Head Start and school-based pre-K. United Way of Southeast Louisiana Women’s Leadership Council collaborated both on the development of the survey as well as strategies for communications and outreach. It was critically important that families would have the opportunity to provide their input on how well their programs serve their children, whether they would choose those programs again and how satisfied they are with their community’s enrollment process. Equally important, United Way of Southeast Louisiana Women’s Leadership Council wanted to ensure that early childhood programs and their respective community networks would receive powerful feedback on what is working well for their families as well as opportunities for improvement.

With its staffing capacity, the Department was responsible for analyzing the data and produced a useful indicator for families that was included on all of the 2015-2016 Practice Performance Profiles that were distributed to Community Networks in November 2016.

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## IMPLEMENTING THE 2016 EARLY CHILDHOOD FAMILY SURVEY

The Department released the 2016 Early Childhood Family Survey, a brief survey of ten questions for families of young children, to more than 1,600 publicly-funded sites in Louisiana. This survey focused on understanding what families of young children are experiencing and how to provide coordinated, quality experiences for them.

The survey features ten questions that covered two key categories:

- Applications and Enrollment
- Program Quality

[See Appendix 1 for the survey tool.](#)

Over 2,500 families responded to the 2016 Early Childhood Family Survey, representing every community and every provider type. The results of the survey provide a broad picture of the experiences and satisfaction of the families of the state's youngest learners. Key results from the family survey are aggregated at the community network level and shared as two informational metrics on the community network practice performance profiles.

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## LEARNING FROM THE RESULTS AND KEY TAKEAWAYS:

Overall, the survey provided insight into what's it like for families to apply for early childhood programs, how satisfied they are with their children's programs and how they think about quality when it comes to early childhood. See charts for a breakdown of the state responses, question by question.

There were also three key takeaways from the 2015–2016 results.

**Takeaway 1: Most families are trying to learn more about the options available for their children, and are benefiting from the coordinated process.**

- 67% of families reported visiting early childhood programs, and 56% reported receiving information about early childhood program options from organizations within their community.
- 63% of families reported finding out about programs was easy, and 72% reported that applying and enrolling was easy.

**Takeaway 2: Louisiana families are generally satisfied with the quality of their early childhood programs, but there are still areas where programs can improve.**

- 90% of families are likely to choose their program again, and 88% of families are satisfied with the quality of the program their child attends.
- However, only 55% of families believe their children are learning important skills, that their program has enough books, toys, and activities, and that their child's caregiver is warm and caring.
- Around a third of families indicated that they weren't sure about several quality markers about their child's program, like whether there were enough adults to support their child, or if their program offered a safe and clean environment.

**Takeaway 3: More information is needed over time to understand how to best support families through the application process to select a high-quality option for their children.**

- 65% of respondents were families of four-year-old children - more information about the experiences of families with young children will be important as the state continues to refine its unified early childhood system.
- As communities continue to coordinate enrollment and improve the quality of their sites, it will be critical to understand the family perspective on the success and failures of these efforts.
- Through a more comprehensive survey that reaches more families, it may be possible to compare the choices families are making about programs to the quality of sites reported by performance profiles, which would be an important insight for programs, communities, stakeholders, and the state.



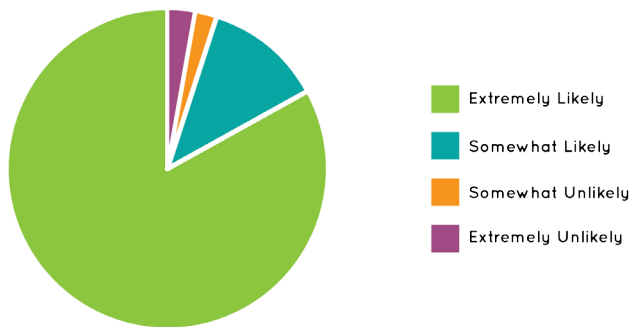
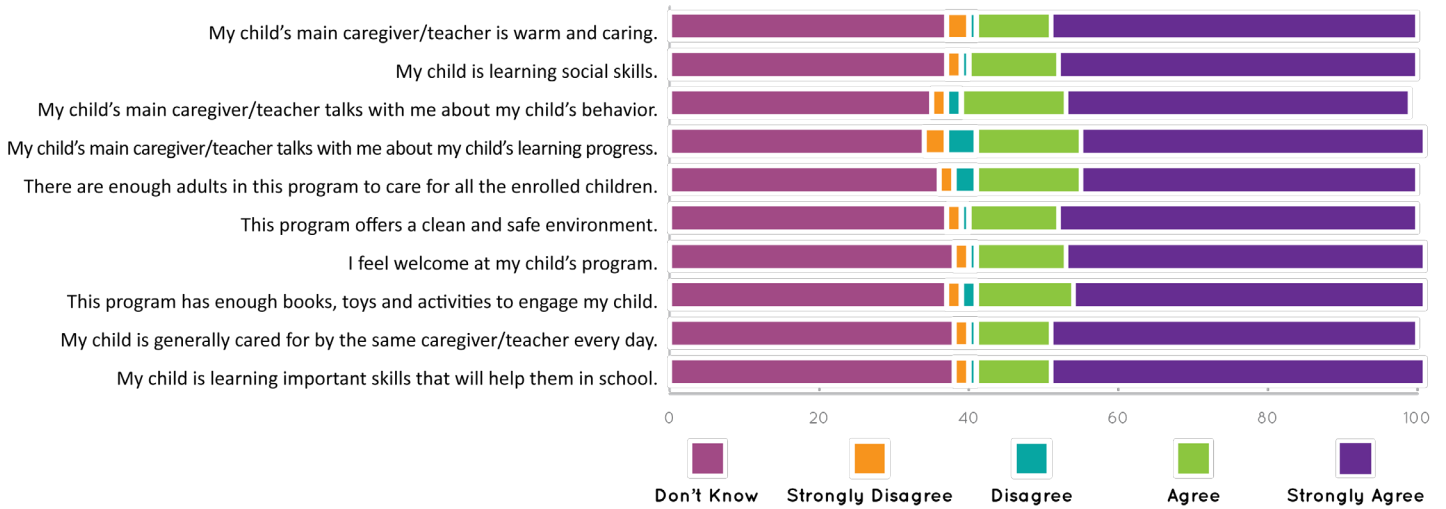
## CONSIDERING NEXT STEPS

Communities are continuing to work to improve early childhood outcomes across the state, and the 2015–2016 Early Childhood Family Survey provides important information for each community to consider as a part of this effort. Community partners must collaborate to coordinate enrollment system for families, and programs must strive to regularly engage the families of their young learners. As local community partners work together to provide high-quality experiences for families and children within Louisiana’s unified system, the state will continue to target technical assistance to improve local coordination and increase quality of care and education.

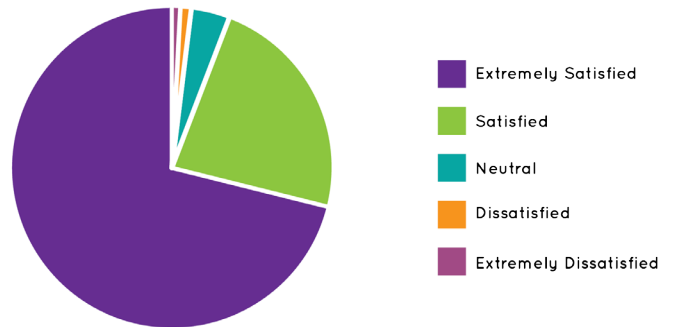
Based on the success of the first year, United Way of Southeast Louisiana Women’s Leadership Council and the Department may consider establishing a multi-year partnership to sustain and build on this effort.

## FAMILY SURVEY RESULTS:

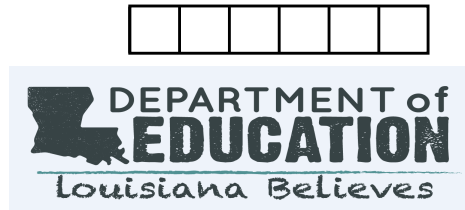
### Parent Satisfaction



If you had to do it over again, how likely would you be to choose this early childhood program?



Overall how satisfied are you with the quality of this early childhood program?



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**I. ABOUT YOUR CHILD**

1. Which category best describes **your child's** age (remember, if more than one of your children attend this early childhood program please focus on your OLDEST child attending this program):

- Younger than 12 months     Between 12 and 24 months     Age 2     Age 3     Age 4 or 5

**II. SELECTING AN EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAM (Child Care, Head Start, Preschool)**

2. When you were looking for an early childhood program for your child most recently, did you...?

	No	Yes
Attend any community events that helped you learn more about early childhood program options in your area?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Receive information about early childhood program options from a place in your community, such as a local school or school district, organization, or community agency?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Use a single application to apply for different early childhood programs at the same time?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Consider any other early childhood programs (other than the one you picked)?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Visit the early childhood program you picked, or any other early childhood programs?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**Please bubble the response that best captures your experience searching for early childhood care.**

3. Finding out about early childhood program options in my community was:

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Very challenging</b>	<b>Somewhat challenging</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Somewhat easy</b>	<b>Very easy</b>

4. Finding out what programs my child was eligible to enroll in was:

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Very challenging</b>	<b>Somewhat challenging</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Somewhat easy</b>	<b>Very easy</b>

5. Applying for and enrolling my child in an early childhood program was:

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Very challenging</b>	<b>Somewhat challenging</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Somewhat easy</b>	<b>Very easy</b>

**III. SATISFACTION WITH EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAM (Child Care, Head Start, Preschool)**

6. Think about your child's CURRENT child care, Head Start, or preschool program. Please rate how much you agree with each statement.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't know
This early childhood program offers convenient hours (e.g. full-day program, before/after care, summer programming).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My child's main caregiver/teacher is warm and caring.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
This early childhood program is in a convenient location (e.g. close to my home, work, or public transportation).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't know
My child is learning social skills, like sharing and following directions, at this early childhood program.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My child's main caregiver/teacher talks with me about my child's behavior.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My child's main caregiver/teacher talks with me about my child's learning progress.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
There are enough adults in this early childhood program to care for all the enrolled children.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
This early childhood program offers a clean and safe environment.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel welcome at my child's early childhood program.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
This early childhood program is affordable for my family.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
This early childhood program has enough books, toys and activities to engage my child.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My child is generally cared for by the same caregiver/teacher every day.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My child is learning important skills that will help him/her in school at this early childhood program (e.g. learning letters and numbers, learning new words, learning to share, developing relationships with other children and adults).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**In questions 7 and 8, we ask you about your overall satisfaction with your early childhood program. Please keep in mind that we will not share your answers with anyone at your early childhood program.**

7. If you had to do it over again, how likely would you be to choose this early childhood program?

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Extremely unlikely	Somewhat unlikely	Somewhat likely	Extremely likely

8. Overall, how satisfied are you with the quality of this early childhood program?

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Extremely dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Extremely satisfied

#### IV. ABOUT YOU

9. What is your highest level of education? *Please bubble the one best answer.*

- Did not complete high school
- High school diploma or equivalent (e.g. GED)
- Some college but no degree
- Two year degree (e.g. AA, AS)
- Four year college degree or higher (e.g. BA, BS, MA, MD, PhD)

**Thank you for your time!**