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Evaluation Report: On-Site Childcare Programs in County Courthouses & Their Effect on Access to the Justice System



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Kalia Hobbs, Nicole Hurst, Alyssa Lund, Yurie Osawa, Leika Suzumura, Kelly Scalise, Julie Tergliafera, Adam Wohlman with faculty advising from Kelly Gilmore, MPH.

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Kelley Amburgey-Richardson, JD, Senior Court Program Analyst, Administrative Office of the Courts

Sierra Rotakhina, MPH, Contracted Project Manager, Administrative Office of the Courts

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Dr. Carl McCurley, Court Research Manager

Children's Home Society of Washington

Nick Flett

Nnenna Ikpa

Dominique Alex, M. Ed

University of Washington - Master of Public Health COPHP Program

Kelly Gilmore, MPH

Eastern Washington University, Bachelor of Social Work Students

Elizabeth Ramirez

Veronica Ruiz

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Terms

Access to justice: the ability to attend court business.

Court business: participating in any role in a process or proceeding conducted in a courthouse on behalf of oneself or another person, including but not limited to meeting with attorney, arraignment, probation meeting, jury duty, meeting with a domestic violence advocate, court facilitator, visiting someone at the Spokane county jail.

Court staff: an employee who works within the justice system in any capacity, this may include judges, bailiffs, attorneys, domestic violence advocates, Family Court Facilitators, and Family Law Information Center Facilitators.

Cross-sectional surveys: provides a point-in-time collection of information.¹

Equity (in the justice system): making intentional actions to improve access and representation of those who have historically been marginalized in the justice system.

Gender bias: judgement based on preconceived notions of gender identity or gender roles.

Gender disparity: inequity related to one's gender identity, see definition below.

Gender identity: "one's internal sense of being male, female, neither of these, both, or other gender(s). Everyone has a gender identity."²

Key informant interview: a form of qualitative data that asks specific questions to people with first and second-hand experience with the topic of interest.

Logic model: a visual representation of the assumed causal relationships between resources and activities to the outputs and outcomes of a program or organization.

Mixed methods: the use of both qualitative and quantitative data to answer an evaluation question.³

On-site childcare program: free childcare provided by the Children's Home Society of Washington inside or near the superior court building/s in Kent and Spokane.

Outreach: information regarding the availability and accessibility of court childcare from either promotional material, such as posters or pamphlets, or court staff, provided to adults looking for childcare so they may conduct court business.

Parent/guardian: parent(s) and legal guardian(s) of children using the court provided childcare programs in Kent and Spokane.

Positionality: the relationship the evaluator has in social and political context of the evaluation which can influence how questions are constructed, data collected, analyzed, and interpreted.⁴

Qualitative data: observational or interview (narrative) information.³

Quantitative data: numerical or statistical information.³

Acronyms

CHSW - Children's Home Society of Washington

COPHP - Community Oriented Public Health Practice

CWR - Children's Waiting Room (Spokane)

Positionality Statement

As an outside group of graduate students working on this evaluation project, we recognize the importance of stating our positionality as evaluators. We understand that our privilege to access the education and resources required to conduct this evaluation places us in a position of power and influence very different than the population Children's Home Society of Washington's on-site childcare programs serve. For this reason, we must take careful responsibility to accurately represent the experiences of parents/guardians throughout this evaluation while respecting their privacy.

We are a group of eight students that come from various racial and economic backgrounds. None of us have used the on-site childcare program and we have not lived or been engaged deeply in either of the cities of Kent or Spokane.

We recognize we are evaluating these programs from an 'outsider' perspective, making it imperative to acknowledge our prejudices, explicit and implicit biases to listen, uphold, and support the community stakeholders of these on-site childcare programs throughout the data collection, analysis, and discussion process.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction and Overview

The Washington State Supreme Court Gender and Justice Commission has requested an evaluation to analyze the process and outcomes of providing childcare for parents/guardians in the justice system as a measure towards gaining gender justice and equitable access by examining The Children’s Waiting Room in Spokane and The Jon and Bobbe Bridge Childcare Center at the Maleng Regional Justice Center in Kent. These two free on-site childcare programs run by Children’s Home Society of Washington serve the parents and guardians of children between 1-12 years old who are attending court business at the Kent Superior Court or any Spokane Court. The objective of this evaluation was to collect and analyze quantitative and qualitative data in an attempt to better understand some of the processes and outcomes associated with providing free childcare for parents/guardians as a measure towards more equitable access to the courts.

Primary Evaluation Question

Are the on-site childcare programs, at the Children’s Waiting Room in Spokane, Washington and the Jon and Bobbe Bridge Drop-In Childcare Center at the Maleng Regional Justice Center in Kent, Washington, enabling access to court business?

Methods

We conducted a convergent mixed-methods evaluation using both retrospective and cross-sectional data, with quantitative and qualitative data collected simultaneously. Cross-sectional data were collected on-site in Kent and Spokane between February 10-27, 2020 through semi-structured key informant interviews, as well as parent/guardian surveys and program registration forms. We obtained historical data from the CHSW database that consisted of quantitative data related to use during 2019. Our three primary populations of interest to answer our research questions were 1) parents/guardians with court business who use the on-site childcare programs, 2) parents/guardians with court business who do not use the childcare programs, and 3) and childcare program staff. In addition, our team engaged legal professionals, resource providers, advocates, and other court staff who regularly interact with our populations of interest.

Results

A total of 79 parents/guardians used the Children’s Home Society of Washington’s on-site childcare programs in Kent (n=43) and Spokane (n=36) between February 10- 27, 2020. A large majority of these users identified as women (83%) and nearly all reported their preferred language to be English. Additionally, a greater proportion of these participants identified as white (62%) compared to those who identified as Hispanic/Latinx (16%), multiracial (16%), and Black (5%). Program data obtained for the year 2019 revealed that both programs serve approximately five children per day and about 111 children per month. However,

during the summer months, the programs receive a considerably higher volume of visitors than other times of the year. During the period of data collection, nearly 60% of on-site childcare program users said they learned about the childcare program(s) from a sign or poster in the courts or from someone who works within the courts.

Through surveys and key informant interviews, parents/guardians attending to court business identified the following barriers to accessing the on-site childcare programs:

1. **Childcare Program Restrictions** - age, program capacity, children with special needs
2. **Childcare Program Operations** - operating hours (lunch hour closure), registration process, location
3. **Negative Perception** - unfamiliar with childcare room and childcare staff
4. **Cultural Barriers** - language, food, customs

However, more than 90% of parents/guardians agreed or strongly agreed that the on-site childcare programs improved their ability to access court services. The aspects of the programs that parents/guardians and other court staff said improved their access to the courts include positive relationships with program staff, no associated cost, convenience, security, and an improved court experience (that some associated with less stress and/or an improved ability to focus on their business).

Recommendations

For the Washington State Supreme Court Gender and Justice Commission

1. Partner with county and state-level initiatives to identify potential funding opportunities, allies, and strategies to increase access to the justice system for parents from marginalized/underrepresented backgrounds.
2. Initiate efforts to support the Children's Home Society of Washington in conducting further research on why various populations are not coming to the courts to attend to court business.

For the Children's Home Society of Washington

1. Tailor current, and develop new, outreach strategies promoting the childcare programs to reach parents/guardians who are accessing the courts and the historically underrepresented populations in the justice system that are not accessing the courts.
2. Foster relationships and build trust among current users and underrepresented populations in the justice system, including communities that are not accessing court services.
3. Assess and adapt new operational strategies to increase the reliability of the childcare programs and promote use.

INTRODUCTION

Background

In the United States, the criminal justice system collects a substantial amount of funding from the fines and fees associated with the criminalization of low-level offenses, which disproportionately affect the poor (especially persons of color)⁵ and perpetuate mass incarceration, poverty, and inequality.⁶ For example, in Washington State, failure to appear for a jury summons is a misdemeanor offense. Yet, an estimated one-third of all jury summons are undeliverable nationally, and a report by the Washington Jury Commission identifies economic reasons and dependent care as two of the primary reasons for non-response.⁷ Furthermore, race, ethnicity and socioeconomic status are closely related,⁸ and “African Americans, Native Americans, and Latinxs are more likely to be economically disadvantaged, have unstable employment, experience more family disruptions, and have more residential mobility.”⁹ The current criminal justice system places a disproportionate burden on low-income persons of color when they are summoned to serve on a jury, due to the inequitable costs associated with taking time away from work and/or accessing suitable childcare. Though data are only available on the burden on low income people to access jury summons, it is reasonable to assume they experience similar challenges when accessing other court services. This includes low-income persons summoned to provide testimony as a witness, survivors of domestic violence, persons who have been victims of a crime, persons charged with a crime, persons on probation, and persons accompanying friends or family members to court to provide support.

Persons convicted of low-level misdemeanor offenses are routinely punished with fines, fees, jail time (and the loss of employment), and/or the suspension of their driver’s license,¹⁰ and such penalties typically necessitate a need for continued engagement with court and legal services. This creates a cycle in which low-income individuals are criminalized for their inability to access the courts and/or legal services and then are continuously punished with compounding legal and financial penalties that accumulate over time. This phenomena is described by a 2018 report on extreme poverty and human rights in the United States by the United Nations’ Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty, Philip Alston, who concludes that “fines and fees are piled up so that low-level infractions become immensely burdensome, a process that only affects the poorest members of society... In many cities and counties, the criminal justice system is effectively a system for keeping the poor in poverty while generating revenue.”¹¹

Free childcare located within the courts is one proposed solution to foster more equitable representation and access to court services. There are currently two such facilities operating in Washington State, in Kent (see Figure 1)¹² and Spokane, and a 2018 survey administered by the Spokane facility revealed that 90% of its users believed that the childcare service improved their access to Spokane County Court. Additionally, in the same survey, a majority of childcare users would not have had a safe place for their children in the absence of the free childcare service.¹³ However, while

Figure 1. The Jon and Bobbe Bridge Childcare Center at the Maleng Regional Justice Center in Kent.



these programs were established to improve the efficiency of the courts, as well as provide children a safe place away from potentially traumatic or harmful experiences while their parents/guardians are involved in the court system, their association with access to the courts is largely unknown. Accordingly, at the request of the Washington State Supreme Court Gender and Justice Commission, this evaluation collected and analyzed quantitative and qualitative data in an attempt to better understand some of the processes and outcomes associated with providing free childcare for parents/guardians in the justice system as a measure towards more equitable access to services and representation within the courts.

Washington State Supreme Court Gender and Justice Commission

The Washington State Supreme Court Gender and Justice Commission (Commission) was formed in 1994 after the Washington State Task Force on Gender and Justice in the Courts published a report that identified gender bias within Washington State's court system.^{14,15} Specifically, the Commission was established to monitor and support the implementation of recommendations intended to promote gender equality in the law and justice system via education, coordination, grant management, program and project development, and oversight.¹⁴

In 2016, the Commission identified the need for an updated report reflective of the current legislative climate regarding gender bias and is now conducting a study focused on 27 priorities relative to the extent and nature of gender bias in the courts today.¹⁵ The study will analyze existing evidence, identify areas that lack research and evidence, and propose, implement and evaluate pilot projects that address bias.¹⁵ The study

will also examine how gender and intersecting identities like race, immigration status, language, age, and sexual orientation impacts opportunity, barriers, and outcomes in the judicial system.¹⁵

Children’s Home Society of Washington, Existing Childcare Programs, and Demographics

The Washington-based non-profit organization, Children’s Home Society of Washington (CHSW), operates two existing on-site childcare programs at courts in Kent and Spokane.^{16, 17} CHSW has been in operation for over 100 years, providing housing for children and serves nearly 30,000 children ages 1-12 years and their families with adoption, early learning, and family support and advocacy services across the state.¹⁷⁻¹⁹

The on-site childcare programs have three specific objectives: 1) shield children from traumatic experiences in court, 2) provide a safe place for children while their parents/guardians attend to court business, and 3) improve the efficiency of courthouse services.¹³

Existing Childcare Programs

KENT: THE JON AND BOBBE BRIDGE CHILDCARE CENTER AT THE MALENG REGIONAL JUSTICE CENTER

In 1997, CHSW opened the Jon and Bobbe Bridge Childcare Center at the Maleng Regional Justice Center in Kent.¹⁶ In 2020, due to complications from the COVID-19 pandemic, the Jon and Bobbe Bridge Childcare Center closed until a new non-profit childcare provider could be secured to reopen. The on-site childcare program was free for families, though a \$5 donation was suggested.¹⁶ The childcare program did not receive public funding and relied on private donations from superior court jurors who donate their per diem compensation in support of the program, donations from families who use the childcare program, and other private contributions.¹⁶ Families/guardians with children between the ages of 1-12 years utilized the childcare program on a first-come first-served basis while they conduct business in the court. Children of jurors also used the facility, but were limited to two children for two days.^{16,20} Up to 12 total children could have been accommodated at one time and the center cared for more than 125 children every month.¹⁶

SPOKANE: THE CHILDREN’S WAITING ROOM

The Spokane County Domestic Violence Consortium opened the Children’s Waiting Room in 1997 in collaboration with many Spokane County departments and two community-based nonprofit organizations. Since 2007, the Children’s Home Society of Washington has operated The Children’s Waiting Room.^{13,17,21} The

childcare program is in a county-owned building near the Spokane County Courthouse and Spokane County provides yearly funding, which amounted to \$77,700, in 2019.^{13,17,21} Private donations also help supplement the program’s needs.^{13,17,21}

Residents of Spokane County with children between the ages of 1-12 years can access the childcare program for free on a first-come first-served basis while they conduct business at the court.^{17,21} Children of jurors can also use the facility depending on availability, and up to eight children can be supervised at one time.²² The center cares for about 1,200 children annually.¹³

Table 1: Capacity for The Two Childcare Programs

	Jon and Bobbe Bridge Childcare Center	The Children’s Waiting Room
Year Established	1997	1997
Capacity*	12	8
Monthly use (approx.)	125	120

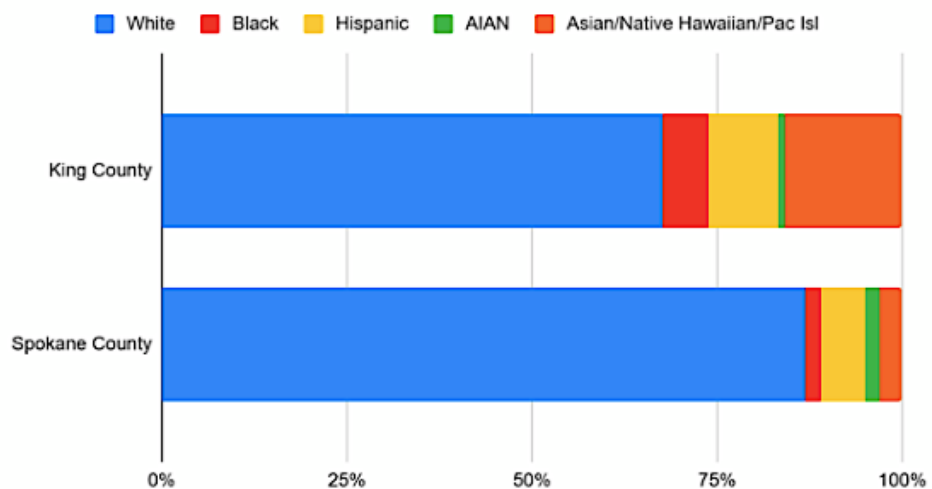
*Depends on the age of children in attendance. Toddlers have a smaller teacher/child ratio than older children

County Demographics

The two superior courts located in Kent and Spokane serve the populations of King County and Spokane county, respectively. The residents in these two counties are different according to the demographic data. Spokane County is the fourth most populous county in Washington State, with an estimated 492,530 total people (2016).²³ Spokane County is less racially diverse than the rest of the state, overwhelmingly white, and comprised primarily of US born US citizens as seen in Figure 2 below.²³ However, the median income is lower than the state’s

average income and about 16% of the population lives at or below 100% of the federal poverty level.²³ Among all households with children under 18 years old in Spokane County, about 36% are

Figure 2. King County (2018) and Spokane County (2017) Race/Ethnicity Demographics^{23,24}



households with only one adult present.²³

In King County, where the Kent childcare is located, the population is more diverse (see Figure 2), as 28% of the population speaks a language other than English at home, and 11.4% of the population has limited English language proficiency.²⁴ While the median household income in King County is significantly higher than the state average, approximately 9.3% of households live at or below 100% of the federal poverty level.²⁵ King County is also the most populous county in the state of Washington with more than two-million people.²⁶

Costs of Childcare by County

The two counties are also very different regarding the average cost of childcare in each county and the median costs of childcare relative to each county's median household income. In King County for example, the average cost per month for childcare is almost double the cost in Spokane across all ages and settings. Generally, childcare costs are higher for younger children and care is more expensive at a center than in the home. In 2017, the median monthly childcare cost for an infant in King County was \$1,499 at a childcare center and \$1,083 for home-based care,⁸ while in Spokane, families could expect to pay \$849 per month for an infant at a childcare center and \$650 per month for home based care.^{23,27} Yet, in terms of affordability, Child Care Aware of Washington concludes that Spokane County is actually a less affordable county to obtain childcare because the county's median income is significantly lower than both King County and the state average.²⁷

Theory Based Evaluation

Theories explain the causal assumptions of how an intervention or activity will influence a desired outcome. In other words, "what causes what."²⁸ When developing our evaluation plan, we started by mapping out the problem and how it was being solved to understand the theory of the program and the intended outcomes. This process can manifest as a series of "if, then...." statements. For example, the courts may have thought after the initial Gender and Justice Task Force report that "*if* we provided childcare at the courts, *then* more parents (women) could access the court, and *if* more women access the court, *then* we can improve jury representation (or other court services disproportionately affected by gender bias)." The Children's Home Society of Washington explained their theory of starting the on-site childcare programs as "*if* we provide childcare, *then* kids won't be exposed to traumatic experiences in court (relating to parental/family issues), and *if* kids are not exposed to trauma, *then* their wellbeing can be protected." This series of *if-then* statements make up the backbone of the logic model listed below, along with the inputs and outputs to clarify what we are measuring in our evaluation. The logic model integrates the objectives of both the CHSW

and the Gender Justice Commission and outlines how the childcare program functions to achieve both the short to long-term outcome goals.

Logic Model (Figure 3)

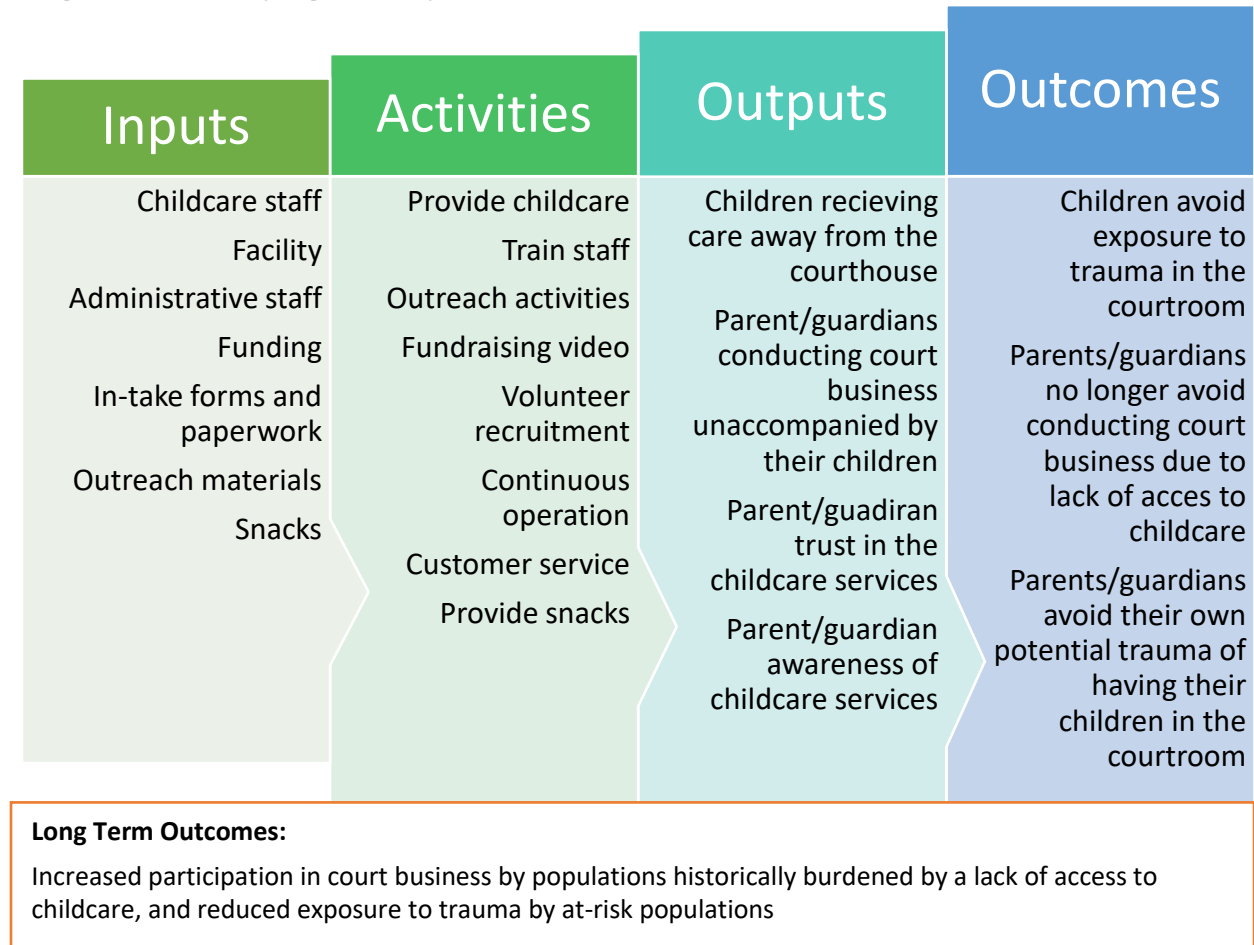


Figure 3 This logic model presents the relationships between the inputs, activities, outputs, and outcome goals of the on-site childcare programs. The model focuses on how a program functions and integrates the short to long-term outcome goals. In order to evaluate if on-site childcare programs provide access to court business, it is imperative to understand how the program operates to better understand the right questions to ask, and whom to ask.

Evaluation Objectives

This evaluation assessed whether on-site childcare programs, at the Spokane County Courthouse and the Maleng Regional Justice Center, enable access to court business among parents/guardians. While the Gender and Justice Commission is expressly interested in combating gender-based disparities related to inequitable representation and access to the justice system in Washington State, this evaluation primarily offers descriptive information about who is using the childcare, how much the childcare is being used, and the court

business the parents/guardians are accessing. This initial information can guide and inform future evaluations the Commission deems important based on our findings.

Evaluation Questions

Primary Evaluation Question

Are the on-site childcare programs, at the Children’s Waiting Room in Spokane, Washington and the Jon and Bobbe Bridge Drop-In Childcare Center at the Maleng Regional Justice Center in Kent, Washington, enabling access to court business?

Sub-evaluation Questions

1. How have the Kent and Spokane court-provided childcare programs been sharing information about available childcare services to parents/guardians of children 1 - 12 years old?
2. How have parents/guardians of children 1 - 12 years old been learning about the childcare programs provided at the Kent and Spokane courts?
3. What are the demographics of parents/guardians of children 1 - 12 years old who have used the court-provided childcare programs in Kent and Spokane?
4. What are the utilization patterns of the Kent and Spokane court-provided childcare programs over the course of a day, week, and year?
 - a. Are there times (of day, week, or year) that are consistently at a higher or lower volume (measured by number of children and length of time at the childcare center)?
5. Which types of court business are being accessed by parents/guardians of children 1 - 12 years old using the court-provided childcare centers at the Kent and Spokane courts?
6. Do barriers to accessing the childcare programs prevent parents/guardians from conducting court business?
 - a. What barriers exist for parents/guardians when accessing the childcare programs?
7. How do parents/guardians who use the court-provided childcare programs at the Kent and Spokane courts indicate the childcare affected their ability to attend to their court business?

See Appendix A to see how our evaluation questions relate to our indicators and populations of interest.

METHODS

Study Design

We conducted a convergent mixed-methods evaluation using both retrospective and cross-sectional data. This means that we collected both quantitative and qualitative data simultaneously. We collected cross-sectional data on-site in Kent and Spokane between February 10-27, 2020. In other words, we collected all new data during a specific period of time. Additionally, we obtained retrospective, or historical, data from the Children’s Home Society of Washington’s database that consisted of quantitative data related to the use of both on-site child-care programs in Kent and Spokane during the year 2019. The combination of qualitative and quantitative data contributed to a rich understanding of who uses the two court-based childcare programs, whether parents/guardians perceive that access to the childcare programs improves their ability to conduct business at the courts, and perceptions of the childcare programs by both users and non-users.

Our team used the available data to:

- Make comparisons between users of the childcare programs at and between the two childcare programs
- Determine whether some populations are affected differently than others regarding improvement in access to court business

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

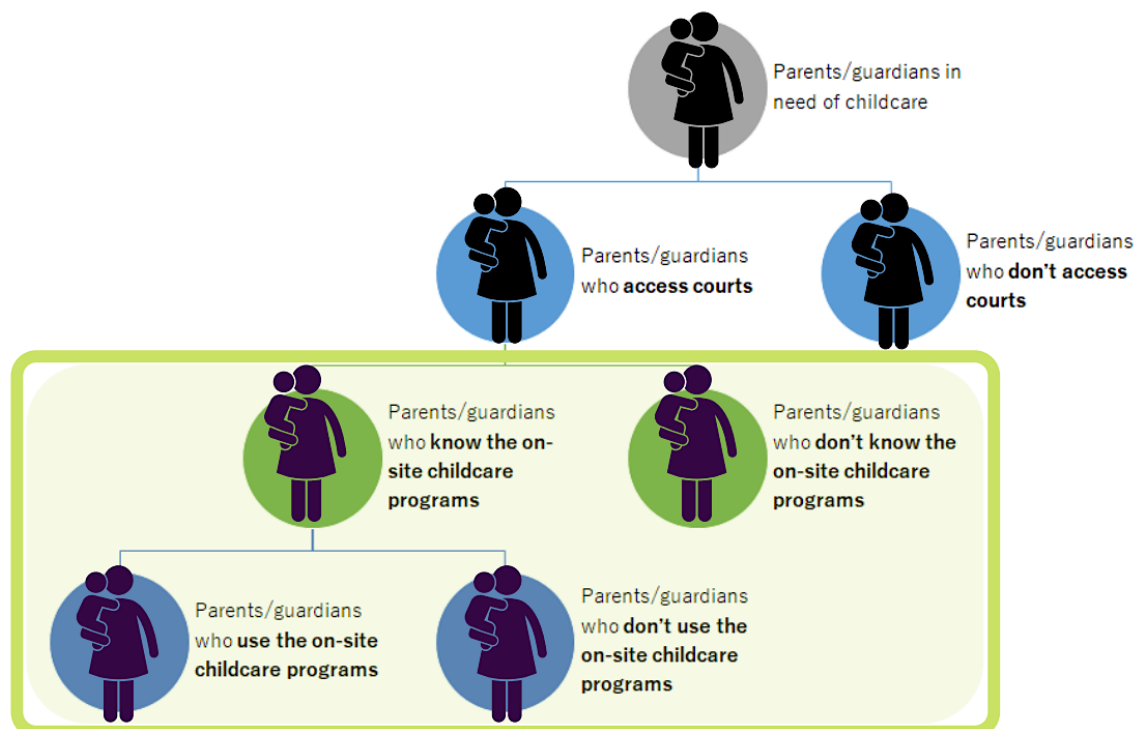
The Federal Government defines research as a “systematic investigation, including research development, testing, and/or evaluation, that is intended to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge.” Although this evaluation may be considered a systematic investigation, our intention was never to create generalizable knowledge and results should not be considered applicable to a larger population beyond the two sites of data collection. Therefore, this evaluation is not considered research and did not warrant review by the University of Washington’s Human Subjects Division. Rather, the intent of this evaluation is to inform both the Gender Justice Commission and CSHW about whether the two court-based childcare programs in Kent and Spokane currently enable access to court services and to recommend how they might do so in the future.

Populations of Interest

We engaged three primary populations of interest to answer our research questions, including: 1) parents/guardians with court business who use the on-site childcare programs 2) parents/guardians with court business who do not use the childcare programs, and 3) childcare program staff. Our team also

engaged legal professionals, resource providers, advocates, and other court staff who regularly interact with our populations of interest. Figure 4 provides a visual representation of our populations of interest.

Figure 4. Segmentation of Our Populations of Interest



SAMPLING STRATEGY

We relied on a convenience sample of parents/guardians who use and don't use the childcare programs during a defined period of data collection (February 10-27, 2020). We also worked with childcare program staff and other stakeholders who introduced our team to courthouse staff, legal professionals, and advocates who were willing to participate in interviews. Finally, we limited sampling to members of each population of interest who met all inclusion criteria.

INCLUSION/EXCLUSION CRITERIA

We required *parent/guardian* participants to meet the following inclusion criteria:

- Have a child between the ages of 1-12 years old with them
- Attending to court business at the Kent Superior Court or any Spokane Court
- Willing and able to fill out a childcare program registration form and/or survey in English or Spanish, or conduct an interview in English

We excluded parents/guardians who did not meet all of the inclusion criteria from the sample population.

We required *courthouse staff, legal professionals, and advocates* to meet the following inclusion criteria:

- Employee of the court, or provide services to, parents/guardians who conduct business at the Kent or Spokane Superior Court
- Willing and able to conduct an interview in English
- Aware of the on-site childcare program at their respective court location

We excluded courthouse staff, legal professionals, and advocates who did not meet the inclusion criteria from the sample population.

We required *childcare program staff* to meet the following inclusion criteria:

- Children's Home Society of Washington (CHSW) employee or volunteer at the Maleng Regional Justice Center in Kent or The Children's Waiting Room in Spokane
- Willing and able to conduct an interview in English

We excluded childcare program staff who did not meet the inclusion criteria from the sample population.

Data Sources and Methods

We utilized several data collection methods, including surveys, interviews, observations, and childcare program attendance databases to gather both quantitative and qualitative data.

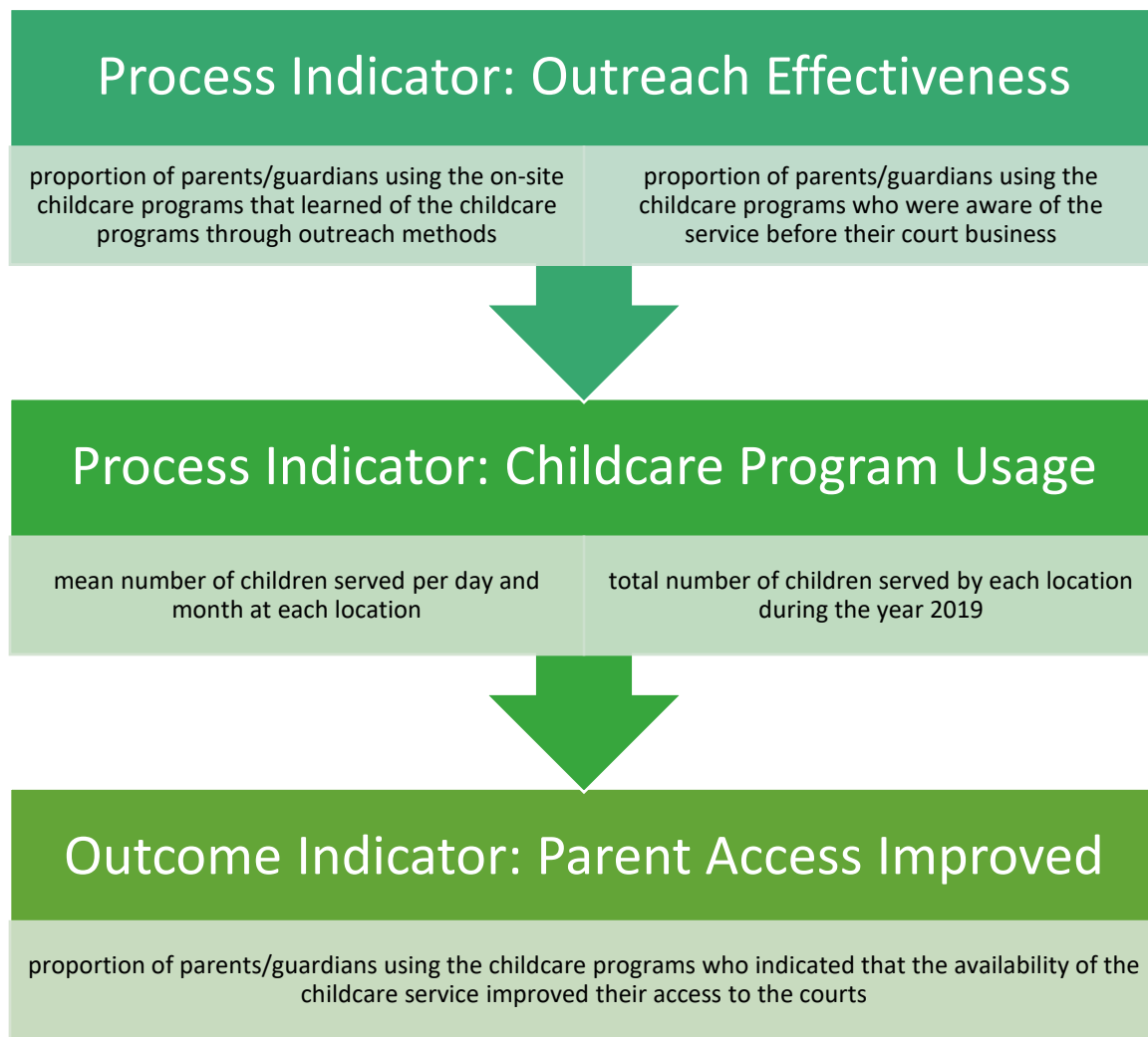
INDICATORS

Indicators are measurable information used to determine if a program is being implemented as intended and/or achieving a specific goal.²⁹ Process indicators measure direct outputs produced by the program and its activities, while outcome indicators measure the effects of a program and its activities over a short or intermediate amount of time (and can be a product of the process indicators).

We chose the process indicators for this project based on our understanding of how parents/guardians access the on-site childcare programs (Figure 5). First, parents/guardians must be aware of the program's existence through some form of program promotion or outreach. Awareness of the childcare program(s) may then influence or affect the parent/guardian decision-making process about whether or not to attend court based on their childcare needs. So, if parents/guardians with limited access to the courts because of unmet childcare needs are aware of the childcare programs, then theoretically, more parents/guardians will use the programs. After we have measured if the program is working as intended, we can determine if the program is

producing the desired effect: that parents and guardians indicate that access to free, on-site childcare within the courts facilitates access to court services and/or business. We will measure this with our primary outcome indicator: a survey question that asks parents/guardians if use of the on-site childcare programs improves their access to court services or their ability to conduct court business.

Figure 5. Process and Outcome Indicators for this Evaluation



QUANTITATIVE METHODS

We collected quantitative data from two primary locations: The Jon and Bobbe Bridge Drop-In Childcare Center in Kent and the Children’s Waiting Room in Spokane. We collected data from both on-site childcare programs primarily through the use of a modified version of the childcare programs’ existing registration

form and by administering a parent/guardian survey. A more in-depth description of the tools and resources we utilized to obtain qualitative data is below:

Registration Forms

All parents/guardians who utilize the on-site childcare programs in both Kent and Spokane must fill out a registration form. Our team modified and standardized CHSW's registration forms to collect additional demographic information, such as parent/guardian race and/or ethnicity, age, preferred language, and gender. We also used the registration forms to identify how parents/guardians learned about the court-based childcare service. See Appendix B and C for examples of the updated registration forms for Kent and Spokane, respectively. After the first and third weeks of data collection we collected the completed registration forms to enter the data and return them to the childcare programs.

Parent/Guardian Surveys

In addition to the registration form, childcare staff asked every parent/guardian who utilized one of the two on-site childcare programs during the data collection period to complete a short survey when they returned from their court business. The survey included several questions to answer on a five-point Likert Scale, and was available to complete both in-person and online (see Appendix D for paper version of survey). Survey questions asked about: how the childcare programs affect access to the courts, whether parents/guardians perceive the childcare programs to be safe, and whether the absence of the childcare programs would have required children to accompany their parents/guardians during court business or proceedings. We trained all childcare program staff and advocates to administer the surveys in a consistent manner. After the first and third weeks of data collection we collected the completed surveys.

CHSW Database

Both on-site childcare programs retain the registration forms completed by parents/guardians who use the childcare programs for several years. This data is entered into an electronic database, through which we obtained one year (2019) of data. Variables included in this data, and which we utilized in our analysis, included: all unique visits to the Jon and Bobbe Bridge Drop-In Childcare Center in Kent and the Children's Waiting Room in Spokane during 2019, the length of each visit in minutes, and the time of day for each visit (morning or afternoon). The data did not include identifying information.

QUALITATIVE METHODS

We collected qualitative data from four primary locations: The Jon and Bobbe Bridge Drop-In Childcare Center and the Maleng Regional Justice Center in Kent, and the Children's Waiting Room and Spokane

Superior Court in Spokane. At each of these four locations, we collected data using semi-structured key informant interviews.

Key Informant Interviews

We conducted semi-structured interviews with key informants, which included: both parents/guardians who used and did not use the on-site childcare programs in Kent and Spokane, childcare program staff in Kent and Spokane, and other court staff, legal professionals, and service providers (such as domestic violence advocates, attorneys, security guards, and process servers) who regularly interact with parents/guardians who do not use the childcare programs. We had childcare staff members from both locations inform parents/guardians who were using the childcare programs about the evaluation project and invite them to participate in a 10-minute interview (for which they would receive a \$10 Safeway gift card for their time). When a parent/guardian expressed an interest in participating in an interview, childcare staff would alert a member of our team, who would then conduct the interview in the childcare program's office. The evaluation team also approached parents/guardians accompanied by children in both court buildings (and not using the childcare) to see if they were willing to participate in a 10-minute interview about childcare, for which they could also receive a \$10 Safeway gift card. We were particularly mindful of the likely stress experienced by parents/guardians with children at court and kept all interviews to 10 minutes or less to minimize any potential burden on their time. Interviews followed an interview guide developed by our team and we recorded the interviews with permission of each interviewee. We transcribed all recorded interviews using a professional transcription service (Rev) and took additional steps (such as the way in which interviews were named and electronically organized) to protect each interviewee's identity.

See Appendix E for the full list of interview questions.

Interviews with parents/guardians who use the on-site childcare programs asked about:

- How parents/guardians are learning about the childcare programs, if the information shared about the childcare programs is appropriate relative to their needs, when they first learned about the childcare programs, and how the childcare programs affect their ability to access the courts.

Interviews with parents/guardians who do not use the on-site childcare programs asked about:

- If they were previously aware of the on-site childcare programs, reasons for choosing not to use the childcare program (if they knew it was available), and how their experience at court may have been different if they were previously aware of the on-site childcare programs.

Interviews with court staff, legal professionals, and service providers asked about:

- Perceptions of how information about the childcare programs are shared with parents/guardians with children between the ages 1-12, how the childcare programs communicate with other offices and resource providers within the court, and anecdotal reasons that parents/guardians choose to use or not use the childcare programs.

Interviews with childcare program staff asked about:

- How parents/guardians are notified that the on-site childcare programs are available, how the childcare programs work with other court services or organizations to promote the childcare programs, and perceptions about what parents like and dislike about the childcare programs.

Data Analysis Plan

We collected and analyzed quantitative and qualitative data independently. After the initial analyses, we conducted a secondary analysis to identify how the two types of data compared, contrasted, and complemented each other. A description of the specific ways in which we analyzed quantitative and qualitative data is below.

QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

We performed a descriptive analysis of selected demographic characteristics of the parents/guardians who utilize the childcare programs in Kent and Spokane. Demographic variables of interest included: parent/guardian age, race/ethnicity, gender, and preferred language. We analyzed these data by performing cross tabulations of each characteristic by childcare program location. In addition to descriptive analyses, we also performed statistical analyses to identify statistically significant differences in survey question responses by childcare program location. We conducted these analyses with z-tests. Furthermore, we also assessed whether there were statistically significant differences in the way that survey questions were answered among all participants at both childcare programs based on parent/guardian gender and their race/ethnicity. We also conducted these analyses with z-tests which allowed us to examine whether members of a particular gender or race/ethnicity were more likely to agree or strongly agree that the court-based childcare programs enabled access to court business than members of another group. We used t-tests to calculate whether there were statistically significant differences in the number of children served per day and per month during 2019.

Evaluation questions, and sub-questions, that we attempted to answer using quantitative methods include:

- How have parents/guardians of children 1 – 12 years old been learning about the childcare programs provided at the Kent and Spokane courts?

- What are the demographics of parents/guardians of children 1 – 12 years old who have used the court-based childcare programs in Kent and Spokane?
- What are the utilization patterns of the Kent and Spokane court-based childcare programs over the course of a day, week, and year?
- Which types of court business are being accessed by parents/guardians of children 1 – 12 years old using the court-based childcare centers at the Kent and Spokane courts?
- How do parents/guardians who use the court-based childcare programs at the Kent and Spokane courts indicate the childcare affected their ability to attend to their court business?

QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

We analyzed qualitative data using content analysis to describe and interpret common themes, and their relationship to each evaluation question, across key informant interviews. We transcribed all the interviews and coded each one using a deductive approach informed by an a priori codebook (see Appendix F) that we developed in relation to our interview and evaluation questions. To support intercoder agreement or consistency, a team of seven coders all coded the same two interview transcripts and then compared, contrasted, and discussed their coding selections and rationale until we reached a high degree of shared understanding. We added codes not originally included in the a priori codebook, but that emerged in discussions between coders, to the codebook as needed. Dedoose software supported both the coding and analysis processes. Analysis was conducted within the context of each evaluation question by: exporting a spreadsheet from Dedoose with all excerpts containing the codes relative to each evaluation question, sorting coded excerpts according to interview type/population and location, identifying the codes most commonly (and sometimes least commonly) cited in interviews of the same type/population (not total frequency of each code but total number of interviews in which each code appeared), and identifying themes based on the most prevalent codes and context of coded excerpts relative to interview type/population and location, and the relevant evaluation question(s).

Evaluation questions, and sub-questions, that we attempted to answer using qualitative methods include:

- How have the Kent and Spokane court-based childcare programs been sharing information about available childcare services to parents/guardians of children 1 - 12 years old?
- How have parents/guardians of children 1 - 12 years old been learning about the childcare programs provided at the Kent and Spokane courts?
- What barriers exist for parents/guardians when accessing the childcare programs?
- How do parents/guardians who use the court-based childcare programs at the Kent and Spokane courts indicate the childcare affected their ability to attend to their court business?

RESULTS

DEMOGRAPHICS

PARENTS/GUARDIANS WHO USED THE ON-SITE CHILDCARE PROGRAM BETWEEN FEBRUARY 10-27, 2020

A total of 79 parents/guardians used the on-site childcare programs at the Kent (n=43) and Spokane (n=36) sites between February 10- 27. Table 1 outlines the characteristics of each site and the total between both sites. The majority of program users identified as female (83%) and the average age was 35 years old (SD + 9.2). Overall, most parents/guardians who used the childcare programs identified as white (61%) with Spokane having a higher proportion of white identified users (70%) compared to Kent (54%). Ninety-nine percent of program users during this time-period indicated their primary language is English. Multiracial was selected by 15.8% of parent/guardians, of which 58% were Hispanic/Latinx.

Table 1: Characteristics of parents/guardians who used on-site childcare between February 10 - 27, 2020

	Kent n = 43	Spokane n = 36	Total n=79
Parent/Guardian Characteristics	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)
Age	35.9 (10.7)	33.4 (6.8)	34.8 (9.2)
# of Children	1.4 (0.8)	1.4 (0.6)	1.4 (.7)
	Total (%)	Total (%)	Total (%)
Gender			
Female	35 (87.5)	23 (76.7)	58 (82.9)
Male	4 (10.0)	7 (23.3)	11 (15.7)
Non-binary	1 (2.5)	0	1 (1.4)
Race/Ethnicity*			
Hispanic/Latinx	4 (9.3)	3 (9.1)	7 (9.2)
Black	4 (9.3)	0	4 (5.3)
White	23 (53.5)	23 (69.7)	46 (60.5)
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	1 (2.3)	1 (3.0)	2 (2.6)
American Indian/Alaska Native	1 (2.3)	2 (6.1)	3 (4.0)
Asian	1 (2.3)	0	1 (1.3)
Multiracial	8 (18.6)	4 (12.1)	12 (15.8)
Other	1 (2.3)	0	1 (1.3)
Primary Language*			
English	41 (97.6)	31 (100)	72 (98.6)
Spanish	1 (2.4)	0	1 (1.4)

*missing data from parents/guardians. Percentages exclude missing data

PARENTS/GUARDIANS WHO PARTICIPATED IN THE SURVEY

We had 37 parents and guardians complete the childcare program evaluation survey with more participants at Kent (n=23) than Spokane (n=14), making a response rate of 46.8%. The average age of survey participants was approximately 34 years old (SD + 8.4) and the majority of participants identified as female (81%). A greater proportion of participants identified as white (62%) compared to those who identified as Hispanic/Latinx (16%), multiracial (16%), and Black (5%). All survey participants indicated English as their preferred language. Eighty-

three percent of survey participants had known about the childcare programs before their current visit to the court and seventy-six percent had previously used the childcare program at least one time. Among survey participants, the top two reasons for attending court was to see a domestic violence (DV) advocate (39%) or another unspecified reason (39%).

PARENTS/GUARDIANS WHO PARTICIPATED IN AN INTERVIEW

Eleven parents and guardians participated in an interview with more participants at Kent (n=9) than Spokane (n=2). The average age of interview participants was approximately 34 years old (SD ± 3.1) and the majority of participants identified as female (82%). A greater proportion of participants identified as white (36%) compared to those who identified as Hispanic/Latinx (27%), multiracial (18%), Black (9%), and Hawaiian/Pacific Islander (9%). Approximately three quarters of interview participants indicated English as their preferred language with the rest identifying Spanish as their preferred language.

HOW PARENTS/GUARDIANS LEARN ABOUT THE ON-SITE CHILDCARE PROGRAMS

The majority of parents/guardians learned about the childcare programs from court staff (34%) followed by a sign or poster (24%). Word-of-mouth accounted for 13%, which included learning about the childcare program direct from a family member, friend, or other person outside of court staff. Table 2 shows the breakdown of how parents/guardians learned about the on-site childcare programs. Approximately 82% of the parents/guardians who used the childcare were aware of the childcare programs before they

Table 2: How and when parents/guardians learned about the on-site childcare programs

	Kent n = 43	Spokane n = 36	Total n=79
Communication Channels*	Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)
Court website	2 (4.7)	2 (5.6)	4 (5.1)
Childcare website	0	3 (8.3)	3 (3.8)
Sign/poster	12 (27.9)	7 (19.4)	19 (24.1)
Court staff	18 (41.9)	9 (25)	27 (34.2)
Brochure	NA	1 (2.8)	1 (1.3)
Word-of-mouth	5 (11.6)	5 (13.9)	10 (12.7)
Multiple	3 (7.0)	3 (9.4)	6 (7.6)
Other	3 (7.0)	2 (5.5)	5 (6.3)
Prior awareness of childcare before current court visit*	Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)
Yes	25 (69.4)	23 (100.0)	48 (81.4)
No	11 (30.6)	0	11 (18.6)

* Some parents/guardians did not fully complete the registration form resulting in missing data. Percentages excluded missing data.
NA: not applicable – Kent does not use a brochure

came to their current court visit, however, this is reflective of these parents/guardians previously using the childcare and using it on multiple occasions.

“I’ve been coming to court. I’ve been to court several times before, so it’s always just part of the process.”

- Parent/guardian in Kent

The childcare staff indicated that their primary way of letting parents/guardians know about the on-site childcare was through signage. Most outreach about the program happens at court when parents arrive with a child and learn of the on-site childcare program from a sign or court staff, like a domestic violence advocate or judge.

“I think for the first time they probably don't know about it until they get here. I know I have had experiences where I’ve had folks in a courtroom conducting a pre-trial calendar or something and I’ve had folks there with little kids and I’ve told them about it that if they wanted to go take their kids there, that’s fine.”

- Kent Family Law Information Center staff

PATTERN OF USE OF ON-SITE CHILDCARE PROGRAMS

In 2019, the CHSW on-site childcare programs served a total of 2,666 children at both the Kent and Spokane sites. When looking at the combined utilization rates from both sites, the daily average was 5 (SD ± 1.5) children per day and 111 (SD ± 34.7) children per month. Again, when looking at both sites combined, the average length of stay for each child is about 90 (SD ± 49.4) minutes. Table 3 provides details on the pattern of use. There is no statistically significant difference in children per day or month between the locations. A greater proportion of children visit both centers in the afternoon (56%) (Chart 1). In 2019, volume was the highest at both locations during the summer months of July and August with August having the greatest number of children (177-178) making

up 14% of the year’s visits (Chart 2). February had the lowest volumes for 2019 with 63 children visiting the Kent location and 56 visiting the Spokane location.

Table 3: Pattern of use at on-site childcare programs (2019)

	Kent n = 1,378	Spokane n = 1,288	Total n = 2,666	
Pattern of Use	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	p-value
# Children/day	5.4 (1.5)	5.1 (1.5)	5.3 (1.5)	0.6
# Children/month	114.8 (34.6)	107.3 (35.9)	111.1 (34.7)	0.6
Length of visit (minutes)	93.7 (48.4)	89.0 (49.8)	91.4 (49.4)	

COURT BUSINESS ACCESSED BY PARENTS/GUARDIANS

The most commonly accessed court business was domestic violence advocates (referred to as DV advocate in Table 4) and custody hearings, accounting for 45% of court business among the parents/guardian during the data collection period (Table 4). Fifty-two percent of parents/guardians using the Kent childcare accessed domestic violence advocates and custody hearings, whereas only 14% of parents/guardians using the Spokane childcare center

Table 4: Court business attended by parents/guardians using On-site childcare programs between February 10-27, 2020

	Kent n = 33	Spokane n = 7	Total n = 40
Reason for Court Visit	Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)
DV advocate	7 (21.2)	1 (14.3)	8 (20.0)
Probation	0	0	0
Dependency	3 (9.1)	0	3 (7.5)
Custody	10 (30.3)	0	10 (25.0)
Sentencing	0	0	0
Arrestment	2 (6.1)	0	2 (5.0)
Public Defender	0	0	0
Court Facilitator	0	3 (42.9)	3 (7.5)
Jury Duty	0	0	0
ARY/CHINS	0	0	0
Other	11 (33.3)	3 (42.9)	14 (35.0)

** Some parents/guardians did not fully complete the registration form resulting in missing data. Percentages excluded missing data.*

accessed these same services. The majority of parents/guardians in Spokane were seeing a court facilitator (43%) or marked “other” (43%). Court business specified as “other” included business like trial, protection order, case and bond hearing. Thirty-nine of the respondents (49.4%) skipped the type of court business on the registration and survey forms, significantly lowering our sample size. We received feedback from one childcare staff person who thought parents were misinterpreting the questions due to poor formatting which lead to parents/guardians only filling one of the two questions about court type and reason for court visit.

BARRIERS TO ACCESSING THE ON-SITE CHILDCARE PROGRAMS

During interviews parents/guardians, court staff and childcare program staff identified several barriers when accessing the childcare program. Barriers can be sorted into four broad categories with operations and perception being:

1. **Childcare Program Operations** - operating hours, registration process and location
2. **Negative Perception** - unfamiliar with childcare room and childcare staff
3. **Childcare Program Restrictions** - age, program capacity and children with special needs
4. **Cultural Barriers** - language, food and customs

All barrier categories were talked about in both the Kent and Spokane childcare program locations with no notable differences between the two locations, except one: The Children’s Waiting Room being located in a separate building from other court services was noted by courts staff, judges, YWCA Advocate and CWR childcare staff as a significant barrier to accessing the childcare program. Location of the Kent childcare program was not a notable barrier.

CHILDCARE PROGRAM OPERATIONS

The childcare hours of operation were identified as a barrier consistently across all populations, including parents/guardians, court staff, and childcare staff. At both childcare program locations operating hours do not extend before or after court hours and are closed mid-day from 12:00 - 1:15 PM. This closure conflicts with a regularly scheduled, mandatory seminar put on by Family Court for parents/guardians who are involved in a child custody case.³⁰

“Your mind's kind of wondering when you'd have to be to court at nine and you've been told that you have to pick your children up at 11:40. I think that's the only thing I was kind of concerned about.”

– Parent/guardian at Kent

NEGATIVE PERCEPTIONS OF THE CHILDCARE

Parents/guardians indicated they were nervous about leaving their child in a place that is not visible, which confirms the perception of domestic violence advocates, judges and other court staff who expressed this as well. Due to tight safety measures, parents/guardians are not allowed in the childcare space if other children are present.

“I’ve worked [with] a lot of people and they’re concerned about leaving their child with a stranger. Their offenders are often times in the buildings, so they’re worried about how safe that is really. They like to have eyes on [their child].”

– Kent Family Law Information Center Staff

CHILDCARE PROGRAM RESTRICTIONS

Parents/guardians identified the age restriction of not accepting children under the age of one as a barrier. Court and childcare staff perceived a larger number of program restrictions, including child age restrictions, childcare program capacity and children with special needs as barriers.

CULTURAL BARRIERS

Cultural concerns were perceived by court staff as a reason for parents/guardians not wanting to leave their child in a childcare center they were unfamiliar with. A Spanish speaking parents/guardian expressed interest and need for a childcare staff that could speak Spanish. Concern about the food being served was expressed by another parent/guardian.

“I think its fear of the unknown to a certain degree. I think in certain cultures I think there is a hesitation with leaving your kids with someone that you don't know”.

– Kent Family Law Information Center staff

ABILITY TO ACCESS COURT BUSINESS

Based on the interview data, specific aspects of the childcare itself supported parents/guardians to use the childcare, which then enhanced their ability to access their court business. Not having their child with them in court also improved the quality of their court experience.

- **Quality childcare staff** - many parents commented that the staff were friendly and welcoming, knew how to comfort their child and were experienced providers.
- **No cost** - providing the childcare service free of charge enabled many parents/guardians to use it.
- **Convenience** - drop off process was fast, location inside court made it easy (Kent site).
- **Security** - many parents/guardians, especially those going to court for custody, were concerned about the safety of their child. When they saw the security measures taken at the childcare, this made them feel comfortable leaving their child to attend to their court business.
- **Improved court experience** - improved ability to focus in court, reduced stress and less distraction for court staff.

“It was really simple. It only took like five minutes to get her in and I felt comfortable leaving her here.”

- Parent/Guardian in Kent

Parents/guardians indicated in the survey how the on-site childcare affected their court visit. Survey respondents could choose whether they strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree or strongly disagree with the following statements:

1. I would have had a safe place for my child to be today if there were no on-site childcare
2. I would have had to bring my child with me to the courtroom today if there were no on-site childcare
3. The on-site childcare program has improved my ability to access court business

After combining responses from both program locations, forty percent of parents/guardians indicated that they did not have another safe place for their child had there not been an on-site childcare at the court. Over 75% of parents/guardians would have had to bring their child with them to court. And more than ninety percent of parents/guardians agreed that the on-site childcare program improved their ability to access court services (Chart 3, 4, 5).

Chart 3: I would have had a safe place for my child if there were no on-site childcare

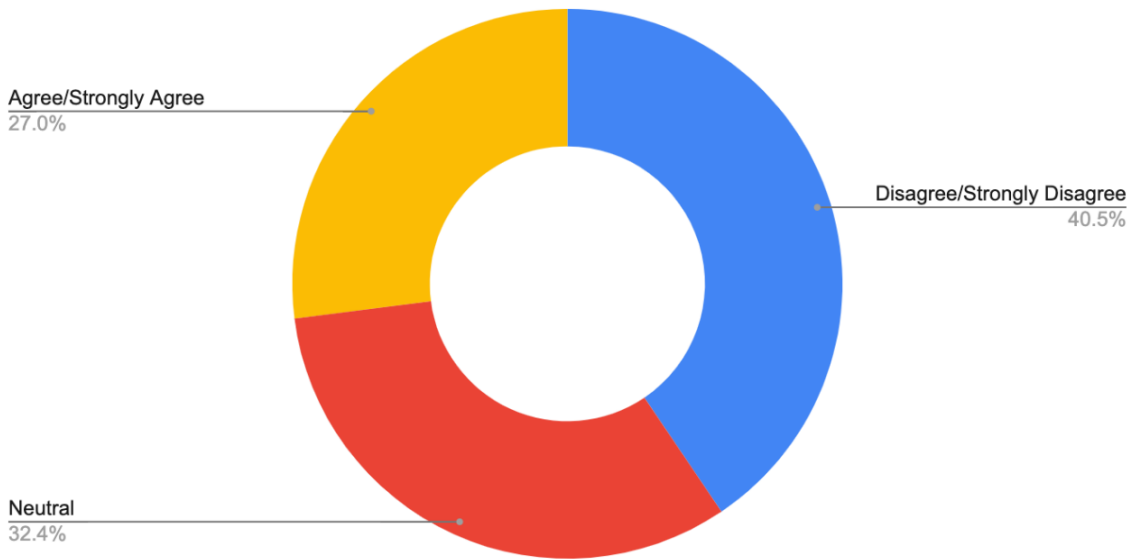


Chart 4: I would have had to bring my child with me to the courtroom if there were no on-site childcare

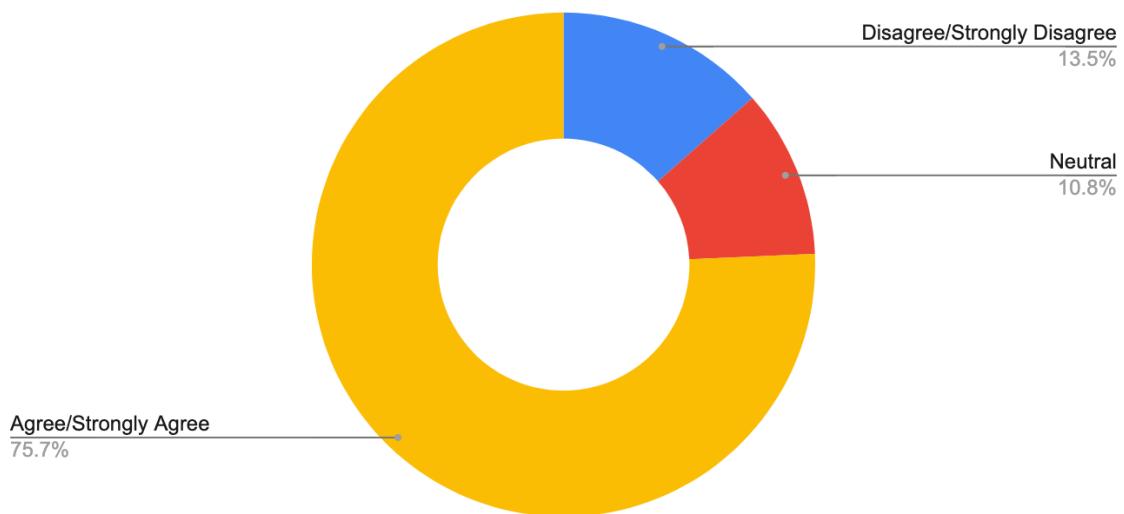
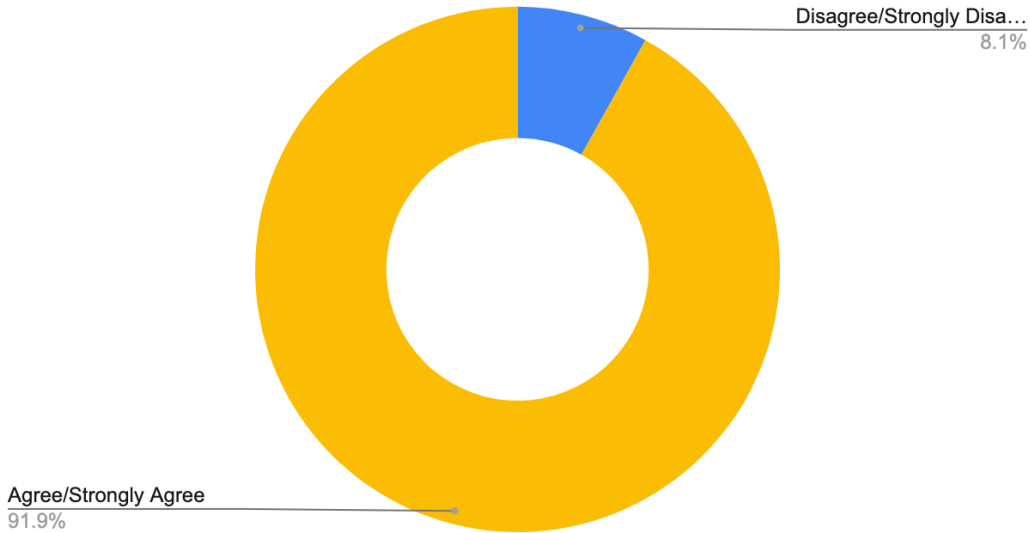


Chart 5: The on-site childcare improved my access to court business



After disaggregating the responses to the survey question about improved access to court business by gender, significantly more female identified respondents stated they strongly agree or agree the childcare program improved their access to court business (see Table 5). Women were statistically more likely to report that the court-based childcare improved their access to court business ($p < .05$).

Table 5: Improved access to court business, disaggregated by gender

	Female n = 29	Male n = 7	
	Total (%)	Total (%)	p-value
Parent agrees on-site childcare Improved their access to court business	28 (96.6)	5 (71.4)	0.03*

*Indicates statistically significant difference ($p \leq .05$)

DISCUSSION

Our findings indicate that the Children’s Home Society of Washington’s two court-based childcare programs, in Kent and Spokane, have quite a lot in common. For example, both locations served a comparable number of children per day and month in 2019. And while the population of King County is nearly four-times larger than Spokane County, the Jon and Bobbe Bridge Drop-In Childcare Center in Kent only served about 90 more children than the Children’s Waiting Room in Spokane over the same year. However, this might be because

the Maleng Regional Justice Center (which houses the Jon and Bobbe Bridge Drop-In Childcare Center) only serves south King County. In contrast, the Children's Waiting Room located on the Spokane County campus serves all of Spokane County. The average visit length was also very similar at both locations in 2019, at about 90 minutes per child, while July and August were the busiest months of the year. Perhaps this reflects the fact that schools are closed for summer during these two months. Additionally, afternoons were busier than mornings, which could be due to the time of day during which children are typically released from school. February, September, November and December were the months with the lowest volumes.

In both locations, the self-identified races and ethnicities of childcare program users (during a limited period of data collection) were relatively close to the larger, overall demographics of each county. However, we would like to bring attention to a few notable discrepancies. In Kent, Asians were underrepresented relative to the demographics of King County, while in Spokane, none of the parents or guardians who utilized the Children's Waiting Room during the collection period identified as Black or African American. This finding holds significance because people of color, particularly African Americans, are overrepresented in the criminal justice system relative to national demographics⁹ and are underrepresented on juries.³¹ As mentioned in the introduction, African Americans and people of color face numerous social and economic barriers that impede their ability to access the courts, which can lead to continued, long-term engagement with the justice system and perpetuate social inequalities. Our findings here reveal an opportunity to expand current outreach efforts to reach populations who may not already be accessing the courts due to unmet childcare needs.

This finding is especially important because, while more than 80% of surveyed childcare program users indicated they were aware of the programs before their day at court, 76% of surveyed users reported utilizing the childcare programs at least one or more previous times. These results make it nearly impossible to determine how often parents/guardians are learning of the on-site childcare programs in advance of their court business and before using one of the childcare programs for the first time. The implication is that if most people learn of the on-site childcare programs after they have already accessed the courts, then persons not already accessing the courts are not benefitting from the service, which, if they knew about, might help them to access the courts. This idea appears to be supported by nearly 60% of childcare program users during our data collection period saying they learned about the service from a sign, poster, or staff member within the courts. Finally, only one parent/guardian at the Kent location indicated a primary language other than English, but 28% of King county's population speaks a language other than English at home.³² This result could be reflective of how the on-site childcare programs are being promoted to the public and highlights the potential need for information to be disseminated in multiple languages.

Women comprised a vast majority of all on-site childcare program users and accounted for nearly 83% of all childcare program users during the data collection period. Almost half of all childcare users who completed a survey reported they were at court to meet with a domestic violence advocate or attend to a custody-related matter, which suggests that the on-site childcare programs are meeting a critical need for survivors of domestic violence. Additionally, it suggests that working closely with domestic violence advocates and strengthening relationships with community-based organizations that serve survivors, might help ensure more members of vulnerable populations are aware of the programs and can access the services they need. Notably, women were significantly more likely than men to agree or strongly agree that their access to court services was improved by their use of one of the on-site childcare programs.

Our findings make it clear that the parents and guardians who utilize the on-site childcare programs overwhelmingly agree that the service makes it easier for them to access court services and/or conduct court business. Two of the factors most cited by parents and guardians and positively associated with improved access to the courts, were the interactions and relationships between parents/guardians and childcare program staff and the programs' convenience of use. While our interviews with persons who work in the courts and/or provide advocacy and related services suggested that parents/guardians use the on-site childcare programs primarily because the childcare is free, this was not reflected nearly as often in our interactions with parents/guardians who had utilized the service. Yet, we know that the costs of childcare can be prohibitively expensive, so the fact that CHSW's childcare programs are provided at no cost is critically important. For instance, in both King and Spokane Counties, it is estimated that the median cost of childcare for an infant and a preschooler (at a childcare center) is equivalent to 38% of median household income.³³ In contrast, according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, childcare is considered affordable if it costs families no more than seven percent of their income.³⁴ In speaking with parents/guardians who have utilized the on-site childcare, it was also revealed that some aspects of the programs, such as hours of operation, age restrictions and physical location of the facilities, make the programs difficult to use and/or add stress to their experience at court. Some parents/guardians also indicated a reluctance to leave their children with strangers or expressed doubt as to whether their cultural needs would be accommodated.

RECOMMENDATIONS

FOR THE WASHINGTON STATE SUPREME COURT GENDER AND JUSTICE COMMISSION

Recommendation 1

Partner with county and state-level initiatives to identify potential funding opportunities, allies, and strategies to increase access to the justice system for parents/guardians from marginalized/underrepresented backgrounds.

Partnering with local agencies and organizations already working on criminal justice reform could help the Commission and the childcare programs expand their ability to meet the specific needs of populations who lack access to court services. Partnerships could also bring in additional resources to expand current outreach efforts and services to reach a more diverse population. For example, King County’s 2016-2022 Equity and Social Justice Strategic Plan’s “pro-equity policy agenda” includes a section dedicated to justice system reforms **and specifically mentions strategies to improve access to the courts**. Currently, the plan does not include on-site childcare as a means to increase court access, however we found in the published literature and from parents in our evaluation, that childcare should be considered as a strategy to increase access to the court system.

Recommendation 2

Initiate efforts to support the Children’s Home Society of Washington in conducting further research on why various populations are not coming to the courts to attend court business.

We advise that in these efforts, the Commission and CHSW identify the reasons why specific populations do not access the courts, understand who is most affected by these issues and how they affect communities differently, and seek to explain how and why such reasons exist so the program can better serve these populations. We believe this report has provided a foundation to continue this work with more resources and time allotted. While this work can take on a multifaceted approach, one option is to continue using the surveys and registration forms and conduct ongoing monitoring and evaluation as part of the program. We recommend these answers inform and/or refine the way that CHSW promotes the on-site childcare programs to reach potential users from populations known to access the courts less frequently. Finally, as we address

in our limitations, our results reflect a greater amount of perspectives from the civil side of the court system and more work can be done to investigate the perspectives of parents/guardians who are involved in the criminal side.

FOR THE CHILDREN’S HOME SOCIETY OF WASHINGTON

Recommendation 1

Tailor current, and develop new, outreach strategies promoting the childcare programs to reach parents/guardians who are accessing the courts and the historically underrepresented populations in the justice system that are not accessing the courts.

Some strategies we believe are within the immediate scope of CHSW are:

Sub-recommendation 1(a)

*Increase knowledge and awareness of the on-site childcare to parents/guardians through avenues **outside** of the courthouses by:*

- Sending information about the childcare program with materials sent or given by Family Court, Family Law Information staff, domestic violence advocates, staff involved in child custody hearings, etc. (recommendation from a parent/guardian)
- Work with each superior court to add information on jury summons about the on-site childcare including how to reserve a spot
- Build relationships with partner organizations, such as the YWCA, CONSEJO, Refugee Women's Alliance, API Chaya, etc. (especially those serving domestic violence survivors and marginalized communities) to spread the word about the childcare service
- Provide brochure/signs in the top five languages used in the Kent and Spokane Courthouses; Interpreter Services can help with these efforts

We believe this is important because promoting the court-based childcare programs solely within the courts does not facilitate improved access to court services if most persons are learning about the childcare programs after they have already accessed the courts.

Sub-recommendation 1(b)

*Increase knowledge and awareness of the on-site childcare to parents/guardians through avenues **within** the courthouses by improving signage at each courthouse to better call attention to the on-site childcare program.*

- Strategically locate the signage advertising the on-site childcare programs (at entrances or outside of the courthouse)
- Ensuring that offices within the court have adequate signage and brochures (in various languages) to post or provide parents/guardians
- Provide brochure/signs in the top five languages used in the Kent and Spokane Courthouses; Interpreter Services can help with these efforts

Recommendation 2

Foster relationships and build trust among current users and underrepresented populations in the justice system, including communities that are not accessing court services.

Insight from parents/guardians (who used the program), domestic violence advocates, judges and other court staff suggest that some parents/guardians who are not using the programs have uncertainty about using the program due to mistrust of the justice system and feeling fearful of leaving their children in a place where they cannot see them. However, we heard from parents and guardians who do use the childcare program that they have positive relationships with staff and feel comfortable using the service, which shows childcare staff are doing a great job at building rapport with parents/guardians. Still, to remedy some of this uncertainty, we recommend the following actions:

- Include testimonials in outreach materials that speak to parent/guardian's positive experiences with the childcare programs
- Identify trusted resources and service providers who serve low-income and communities of color in King and Spokane Counties to promote the childcare program in ways that work best for their community
- Hold open houses for court staff, such as domestic violence advocates, Family Court staff, public defenders, bailiffs and external organizations that serve parents/guardians to tour the childcare locations to learn more, so they can confidently promote the program and ease parent/guardian concerns

Recommendation 3

Assess and adapt new operational strategies to increase the reliability of the childcare programs and promote use.

One barrier recognized by parents/guardians in Kent and Spokane is a lack of reliability of the on-site childcare service. To encourage continuous operation and increase trust in the programs' reliability, we suggest the following:

- Consider patterns of use to inform childcare staffing needs – increase staffing during school breaks and afternoons when use is notably higher thereby reducing the potential for rejecting new children due to capacity
- Stagger lunch hour breaks among the staff so that the on-site childcare programs remain open during courthouse business hours
- In Spokane, cross-train other Children's Home Society of WA employees to become "floaters" and reduce the likelihood of closure due to staffing issues
- Consider alternative registration processes to minimize paperwork and time for repeat users and reduce the need for parents/guardians to fill out registration forms multiple times in a short period

LIMITATIONS

We must acknowledge the various limitations of this evaluation, including geographical and time constraints, as well as how we went about conducting this evaluation compared to the best practice of research and evaluation. The following describes the limitations of this project.

GEOGRAPHICAL AND TIME CONSTRAINTS

Overall, we had 10 weeks to plan and implement this evaluation. We also had approximately three weeks to collect data via registration forms and surveys and only a few days to conduct interviews. Since each location was outside the Seattle area and Spokane is located hundreds of miles away, our time at each site was restricted. Furthermore, the limited time at each location inhibited our ability to interview a high volume of parents and guardians to participate in our evaluation and network with various staff at each justice center.

SAMPLING STRATEGY

Due to our sampling strategy as well as time and resource constraints, our sample is not representative of the parents/guardians who use the on-site childcare programs or access the courthouse. We were limited to almost exclusively cross-sectional data collected during a relatively short period and only collected data from persons who are proficient in English or Spanish, with all interviews conducted in English. Considering the diversity of courthouse attendees in each county, this is a significant limitation and excluded the perspectives of parents/guardians who may have otherwise been willing to complete a survey and/or participate in an interview. Also, we did not talk to the parents/guardians who seemed nervous, stressed out, or in a hurry, which naturally biased our sample to parents/guardians who had more time and seemed less stressed. Lastly, we were unable to collect survey data from parents and guardians who did not use the court child program as we were unable to create and disseminate a specific survey for this population. In sampling court staff for interviews, we relied on snowball sampling, which resulted in interviewing more court staff on the civil side rather than the criminal side of the court system. This sampling strategy among court staff limited the opportunity to gain valuable perspective from those who work with parents/guardians on the criminal side of the court.

DATA COLLECTION

Our team developed each question added to the registration form and survey, as well as the questions in the interview guide based on our logic model. We did not have the capacity to pilot test any of the material to ensure clarity, which limits the validity of our data collection materials. For example, the question on the registration form and survey asking participants about their primary language did not adequately capture the participants preferred language or language spoken at home due the way the question was worded. Finally, we did not have full control over the data collection process as we made various modifications to accommodate participants at each site. For example, we slightly modified questions to provide clarification and conducted some interviews with multiple people at one time. There is also the potential for recall bias from survey and interview participants.

DATA ANALYSIS

The low statistical power of our sample size may indicate that on-site childcare programs do not affect enabling access to the courts even though such an effect may exist. Furthermore, since we were unable to interview parents/guardians who did not come to court, we are not able to conclude why parents/guardians do not attend court business. There is also a chance that when we compare quantitative data across childcare programs or demographic characteristics that a statistically significant difference or differences will

exist by chance. That is, the differences we may observe between childcare program sites, or between demographic characteristics, may be attributable to differences in the sample populations themselves. This threat also applies to data collected from key informant interviews. For qualitative analysis, we only could do one round of coding while simultaneously learning the process. We also acknowledge that while the input we received from key informant interviews was extremely valuable, there are limitations to these responses since they are perceptions of the parent/guardian experience.

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APPENDIX A – RESEARCH QUESTIONS CHART

Research Question	Indicator	Data Source	Target Population
How have the Kent and Spokane court-based childcare programs been sharing information about available childcare services to parents/guardians of children 1 - 12 years old?	Classification of outreach modes Utilization Rates	Interview with childcare staff regarding outreach In-take Forms	<input type="checkbox"/> Access the courts <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Know about the childcare <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Use the childcare <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Do NOT use the childcare

<p>How have parents/guardians of children 1 - 12 years old been learning about the childcare programs provided at the Kent and Spokane courts?</p>	<p>% parents/guardians who knew about the childcare programs before the day of their court business</p>	<p>Parent/guardian surveys</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Access the courts <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Know about the childcare <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Use the childcare <input type="checkbox"/> Do NOT use the childcare</p>
<p>Do barriers to accessing the childcare programs prevent parents/guardians from conducting court business?</p>	<p>% parents/guardians who felt the court-based childcare program met their expectations for safety for their child to be while attending to court business</p>	<p>Interviews</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Access the courts <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Know about the childcare <input type="checkbox"/> Use the childcare <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Do NOT use the childcare</p>
<p>How do parents/guardians who use the court-based childcare programs at the Kent and Spokane courts indicate the childcare affected their ability to attend to their court business?</p>	<p>% parents/guardians who indicate their access to the courts was improved because they were able to utilize the childcare programs</p>	<p>Surveys Interviews</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Access the courts <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Know about the childcare <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Use the childcare <input type="checkbox"/> Do NOT use the childcare</p>

APPENDIX B – REGISTRATION FORM SPOKANE

REGISTRATION FORM

CHILDREN’S WAITING ROOM

721 N Jefferson, Room #101 • Spokane, WA 99260 • (509) 477-6815



PARENT/GUARDIAN INFORMATION *(Please print clearly)*

<p>_____</p>	<p>_____</p>	<p>_____</p>
<p><i>First Name</i></p>	<p><i>Last Name</i></p>	<p><i>Today's Date</i></p>
<p>_____</p>	<p>_____</p>	<p>_____</p>

<i>Address</i>	<i>City</i>	<i>State</i>	<i>Zip Code</i>
()	()		

<i>Primary Phone</i>	<i>Alternate Phone</i>
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Parent/Guardian Age: _____ **Gender:** F M Non-Binary Trans F Trans M Other

Race/Ethnicity (Mark all that apply)

<input type="checkbox"/> Hispanic/Latino	<input type="checkbox"/> Hawaiian Native or Pacific Islander	<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____
<input type="checkbox"/> African, African American, or Black	<input type="checkbox"/> American Indian or Alaska Native	
<input type="checkbox"/> White or Caucasian	<input type="checkbox"/> Asian (not Pacific Islander)	

Parent/Guardian Primary Language: English Spanish Other: _____

How did you learn about the Children’s Waiting Room: court website Children’s waiting room website
 poster court staff brochure sign word of mouth
 other (please specify): _____

Did you know about the Children’s Waiting Room before you arrived at court today? Y / N

YOUR DESTINATION TODAY: Superior Court District Court Municipal Court Juvenile Court **Room Number:** _____
Name of attorney _____ **Name of who you are visiting** _____

<input type="checkbox"/> DV Advocate	<input type="checkbox"/> Probation	<input type="checkbox"/> Spokane County Jail	Name of who you are visiting:

<input type="checkbox"/> Public Defenders	<input type="checkbox"/> Court Facilitator	<input type="checkbox"/> Jury Duty	<input type="checkbox"/> Other:

CHILD INFORMATION *(Please print clearly)*

CHILD #1	First name: _____	Last name: _____	DOB: _____	Gender <input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> F
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Race/Ethnicity (Mark all that apply)

- Hispanic/Latino
- African, African American, or Black
- Asian (not Pacific Islander)
- Hawaiian Native or Pacific Islander
- American Indian or Alaska Native
- White or Caucasian
- Other: _____

What is your relationship to this child? _____
 Any allergies/chronic illnesses? No Yes: _____
 Any medications? No Yes: _____
 Are immunizations current? No Yes
 What else would you like us to know about your child? _____

 Primary Language: English Spanish Other: _____
 Limited English/Non-English speaking

CHILD #2

First name: _____

Last name: _____

DOB: _____

Gender M F

Race/Ethnicity (Mark all that apply)

- Hispanic/Latino
- African, African-American, or Black
- Asian (not Pacific Islander)
- Hawaiian Native or Pacific Islander
- American Indian or Alaska Native
- White or Caucasian
- Other: _____

What is your relationship to this child? _____

Any allergies/chronic illnesses? No Yes: _____

Any medications? No Yes: _____

Are immunizations current? No Yes

What else would you like us to know about your child? _____

Primary Language: English Spanish Other: _____

Limited English/Non-English speaking

CHILD #3

First name: _____

Last name: _____

DOB: _____

Gender M F

Race/Ethnicity (Mark all that apply)

- Hispanic/Latino
- African, African-American, or Black
- Asian (not Pacific Islander)
- Hawaiian Native or Pacific Islander
- American Indian or Alaska Native
- White or Caucasian
- Other: _____

What is your relationship to this child? _____

Any allergies/chronic illnesses? No Yes: _____

Any medications? No Yes: _____

Are immunizations current? No Yes

What else would you like us to know about your child? _____

Primary Language: English Spanish Other: _____

Limited English/Non-English speaking

Staff Only: AM PM

EMERGENCY CONTACTS -In the event of an emergency, on either my part or that of the Children's Waiting Room, I hereby authorize information and/or my children to be released by Children's Home Society of Washington (CHSW) staff to the following person(s). This release concerns myself and any child(ren) in the care of the CHSW of whom I am the parent or legal guardian. **Please Note: Staff will require Identification before discharging children to these person(s)**

#1

First Name

Last Name

Relationship

City

Primary Phone Number

Alternate Phone Number

#2

First Name

Last Name

Relationship

City

Primary Phone Number

Alternate Phone Number

AUTHORIZATION AND CONSENT

I give permission for the Children’s Waiting Room (CWR), operated by CHSW to care for the above-named child(ren) of whom I am the parent or legal guardian. **I understand and agree to the following:**

- **HOURS & PICKUP** - The CWR closes daily for lunch from 12-1:00, and for the day at 5:00 p.m. If my above-named child(ren) is not picked up before closure hours and CHSW staff are unable to contact either myself or my emergency contacts, the Division of Child and Family Services and/or Law Enforcement may be contacted.
- **MEDICAL EMERGENCY TRANSPORT & TREATMENT** - In the event of a medical emergency, CHSW staff will make all reasonable efforts to contact me and/or my emergency contacts. If I cannot be reached, and it is urgently necessary, I consent to have my child(ren) transported by ambulance to the nearest emergency center. Further, I consent to medical treatment and procedures to be performed by a licensed physician or hospital when deemed immediately necessary and advisable by the physician or hospital to safeguard the health of my child(ren).
- **FIRST AID/CPR** - In a medical emergency, I authorize emergency medical treatment, to include First Aid and/or CPR (Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation), be given to my child(ren) by a qualified CHSW staff or medical professional.
- **MANDATED REPORTERS** - Staff are required by law to report any suspected child abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities. Whenever possible, CHSW staff will first discuss any concerns with me so that a co-report can be made.

Parent/Guardian Signature _____
Date

Staff Signature _____
Date

	<i>Time In</i>	<i>Parent Initials</i>	<i>Staff Initials</i>	<i>Time Out</i>	<i>Authorized Signature</i>	<i>Staff Initials</i>
AM		<i>Signed above</i>	<i>Signed above</i>			
PM						

Last Revision: 2/20

Original filed with CHSW Site Supervisor. Retain for 1 year after annual contract ends

APPENDIX C – REGISTRATION FORM KENT



REGISTRATION FORM
JON AND BOBBE BRIDGE DROP-IN CHILDCARE CENTER
 401 4th Ave N • Kent, WA 98032 • (253) 854-5625

AM PM

Confirmed Pick-up
 Donation
 Wrist Band

PARENT/GUARDIAN INFORMATION *(Please print clearly)*

<i>First Name</i>	<i>Last Name</i>	<i>Today's Date</i>

<i>Address</i>	<i>City</i>	<i>State</i>	<i>Zip Code</i>
()	()		

<i>Primary Phone</i>	<i>Alternate Phone</i>
----------------------	------------------------

Parent/Guardian Age: _____ **Gender:** F M Non-Binary Trans F Trans M Other

Race/Ethnicity (Mark all that apply)

Hispanic/Latino Hawaiian Native or Pacific Islander Other: _____

African, African-American, or Black American Indian or Alaska Native

White or Caucasian Asian (not Pacific Islander)

Parent/Guardian Primary Language: English Spanish Other: _____

How did you learn about this onsite childcare center: court website Children’s waiting room website

poster court staff brochure sign word of mouth other (please specify): _____

Did you know about the onsite childcare before you arrived at court today? Y / N

YOUR DESTINATION TODAY: Superior Court District Court Municipal Court Juvenile Court **Room Number:** _____

Name of party (if not self): _____ **Name of attorney:** _____

What is your court related business:

DV Advocate Probation Dependency Custody Sentencing Arraignment

Public Defenders Court Facilitator Jury Duty ARY/CHINS Other: _____

CHILD INFORMATION *(Please print clearly)*

CHILD #1	First name: _____	Last name: _____	DOB: _____	Gender <input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> F
-----------------	--------------------------	-------------------------	-------------------	---

Race/Ethnicity (Mark all that apply)

Hispanic/Latino

African, African-American, or Black

Asian (not Pacific Islander)

Hawaiian Native or Pacific Islander

American Indian or Alaska Native

White or Caucasian

Other: _____

What is your relationship to this child? _____

Any allergies/chronic illnesses? No Yes: _____

Any medications? No Yes: _____

Are immunizations current? No Yes

What else would you like us to know about your child? _____

Primary Language: English Spanish Other: _____

Limited English/Non-English speaking

CHILD #2

First name: _____

Last name: _____

DOB: _____

Gender M F

Race/Ethnicity (Mark all that apply)

- Hispanic/Latino
- African, African-American, or Black
- Asian (not Pacific Islander)
- Hawaiian Native or Pacific Islander

- American Indian or Alaska Native
- White or Caucasian
- Other: _____

What is your relationship to this child? _____

Any allergies/chronic illnesses? No Yes: _____

Any medications? No Yes: _____

Are immunizations current? No Yes

What else would you like us to know about your child?

Primary Language: English Spanish Other: _____

Limited English/Non-English speaking

CHILD #3

First name: _____

Last name: _____

DOB: _____

Gender M F

Race/Ethnicity (Mark all that apply)

- Hispanic/Latino
- African, African American, or Black
- Asian (not Pacific Islander)
- Hawaiian Native or Pacific Islander

- American Indian or Alaska Native
- White or Caucasian
- Other: _____

What is your relationship to this child? _____

Any allergies/chronic illnesses? No Yes: _____

Any medications? No Yes: _____

Are immunizations current? No Yes

What else would you like us to know about your child? _____

Primary Language: English Spanish Other: _____

Limited English/Non-English speaking

Staff Only: AM PM

EMERGENCY CONTACTS -In the event of an emergency, on either my part or that of the Jon and Bobbe Bridge Childcare Center, I hereby authorize information and/or my children to be released by Children’s Home Society of Washington (CHSW) staff to the following person(s). This release concerns myself and any child(ren) in the care of the CHSW of whom I am the parent or legal guardian. **Please Note: Staff will require Identification before discharging children to these person(s)**

#1

First Name

Last Name

Relationship

City

Primary Phone Number

Alternate Phone Number

#2

<i>First Name</i>	<i>Last Name</i>	<i>Relationship</i>
<i>City</i>	<i>Primary Phone Number</i>	<i>Alternate Phone Number</i>

AUTHORIZATION AND CONSENT

I give permission for the Jon and Bobbe Bridge Childcare Center, operated by CHSW to care for the above-named child(ren) of whom I am the parent or legal guardian. **I understand and agree to the following:**

- **HOURS & PICKUP** - The childcare center closes daily for lunch from 11:50-1:15, and for the day at 4:15 p.m. If my above-named child(ren) is not picked up before closure hours and CHSW staff are unable to contact either myself or my emergency contacts, the Division of Child and Family Services and/or Law Enforcement may be contacted.
- **MEDICAL EMERGENCY TRANSPORT & TREATMENT** - In the event of a medical emergency, CHSW staff will make all reasonable efforts to contact me and/or my emergency contacts. If I cannot be reached, and it is urgently necessary, I consent to have my child(ren) transported by ambulance to the nearest emergency center. Further, I consent to medical treatment and procedures to be performed by a licensed physician or hospital when deemed immediately necessary and advisable by the physician or hospital to safeguard the health of my child(ren).
- **FIRST AID/CPR** - In a medical emergency, I authorize emergency medical treatment, to include First Aid and/or CPR (Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation), be given to my child(ren) by a qualified CHSW staff or medical professional.
- **MANDATED REPORTERS** - Staff are required by law to report any suspected child abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities. Whenever possible, CHSW staff will first discuss any concerns with me so that a co-report can be made.

Date of Last Doctor Visit _____

Name of Child's Physician _____

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

Staff Signature

Date

	<i>Time In</i>	<i>Parent Initials</i>	<i>Staff Initials</i>	<i>Time Out</i>	<i>Authorized Signature</i>	<i>Staff Initials</i>
AM		<i>Signed above</i>	<i>Signed above</i>			
PM						

Last Revision: 2/20

Original filed with CHSW Site Supervisor. Retain for 1 year after annual contract ends

APPENDIX D – PARENT/GUARDIAN SURVEY

The follow example of the parent/guardian survey is specifically for Kent, but the questions are the same for both locations with the only difference being the heading.

**JON AND BOBBE BRIDGE DROP-IN CHILDCARE CENTER
CONSUMER SURVEY**



*This survey is **voluntary** and **anonymous**. Your responses will not be tied directly to you and will not affect your ability to access the drop-in childcare center. The information you provide will help us to improve our services.*

Today's date: _____

Parent/Guardian Age: _____ **Gender:** F M Non-Binary Trans F Trans M Other

Race/Ethnicity (Mark all that apply)

- Hispanic/Latino
- African, African-American, or Black
- White or Caucasian
- Other: _____
- Hawaiian Native or Pacific Islander
- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian (not Pacific Islander)

Primary Language: English Spanish Other: _____

Number of children you brought to the childcare center today: _____

1. Did you know about the onsite childcare program before you arrived at court today? Y / N

2. How many times have you used the onsite childcare before today? None 1-2 times 3-4 times
 5 or more

3. For which of the following reasons are you using the childcare center today?

- Court (Specify): Superior Municipal District Juvenile
- Domestic Violence Advocate Probation Court Facilitator Dependency
- Public Defenders Office Arraignment Custody Meeting with Attorney
- Sentencing Jury Duty ARY/CHINS Other (Specify): _____

Please check the box that best describes your response to the following statements

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
4. If there were no childcare center, I would have had a safe place for my child to be today.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

5. If there were no childcare center, I would have had to bring my child with me to the courtroom today.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. The drop in childcare center has improved my ability to access services on the Maleng Regional Justice Center Campus.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

7. Were there any things that made it difficult to use the childcare center?

8. Were there any things that made it easy to use the childcare center?

APPENDIX E – INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Interview Questions
<p><u>Population: Parents and Guardians who USE the childcare center</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How did you learn about the childcare service? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Do you have suggestions on how to get the word out about the childcare that would best meet your needs? b. How could the information that you received about the childcare program be improved to better meet your needs? 2. How did the childcare center make your experience at the court easier or more difficult? 3. How would your experience at court have been different if the childcare program was not available? 4. What makes it easy or hard to use the childcare center? 5. Anything else you would like to share about your experience using the childcare center?
<p><u>Population: Parents and Guardians who ATTEND court, but who DO NOT USE the childcare center</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Did you know about the childcare center before you came to court today? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Knew about the childcare center, but did not use it: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. What are some reasons you did not use the childcare center while at the court? ii. What would make it more likely for you to use the childcare program in the future? iii. In what ways might the childcare center not meet your needs? b. Did not know about the childcare center: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> . If you knew about it, would you have used it? What are some reasons why or why not?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. How do you think the childcare program should share information so that more parents/guardians know that the service is available before they come to court? ii. How do you think your experience at court would have been different if you had known about the childcare program?
<p><u>Population: Court staff: DV advocates, prosecutors, FLIC staff, security guards, process servers</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What do you think are the most common ways that parents/guardians learn about the childcare centers? 2. How do you, or your office, share information about the childcare center to court attendees with children? 3. What are some reasons parents/guardians like using the childcare center? 4. What are some reasons parents/guardians say they do not use the childcare center? 5. Do you have suggestions on how the childcare could be more useful to parents/guardians with children?
<p><u>Population: Childcare Program Staff</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How do you try to inform parents and guardians that the childcare program/center is available? 2. How do you share information with other court services or organizations to promote the childcare program? 3. Have you heard from parents what makes it easy or hard to use the childcare program/center?
<p><u>Population: Community Partner Organization</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Tell me a little about your organization and your relationship/work with Kent Court? 2. Do you know about the childcare program at the Kent court? 3. Do you tell families you work with that this childcare is available if they need to access the courts? 4. What are ways that you think will be most effective for getting the word out about the childcare service to your community? 5. Is there anything else you want to share to inform the childcare how they can best serve your community?

APPENDIX F – CODEBOOK

Code	Sub-code	Description
Question 1:		
How have the Kent and Spokane court-based childcare programs been sharing information about available childcare services to parents/guardians of children 1 - 12 years old?		
<i>Promotion/Communication Strategy</i>	<i>Technique, strategy, and/or materials to promote a product or service</i>	
	Brochure	Small card or trifold paper

	Childcare program website	Online platform specifically for the childcare program
	Justice center website	Online platform specifically for the justice center that includes information on the childcare program
	Mailing	Flyer, card, or informational letter sent by mail
	Email	Message sent by email address
	Text	Text message by cell phone
	Word of mouth	Verbally from another person
	Sign	Poster or flyer on a wall, or name of childcare program on a directory

Question 2: How have parents/guardians of children 1 - 12 years old been learning about the childcare programs provided at the Kent and Spokane courts?

<i>Parent/Guardian Awareness</i>		<i>How and when parents/guardians are learning about court-based childcare programs</i>
	Brochure	Small card or trifold paper
	Website	Online platform
	Mailing	Flyer, card, or informational letter sent by mail
	Email	Message sent by email address
	Text	Text message by cell phone
	Interpersonal interaction Sub-codes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Court staff • Childcare staff • Family/friend 	Verbally from another person

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> External organization 	
	Sign	Poster or flyer on a wall, or name of childcare program on a directory
	Prior knowledge	Parent/guardian knew about the childcare program before the day of their court business
	Day of court knowledge	Parent/guardian learned about the childcare program on the day of their court business

Question 3:

What barriers exist for parents/guardians when accessing the childcare programs? Do barriers to accessing the childcare programs prevent parents/guardians from conducting court business?

<i>Childcare barrier</i>		<i>Factors and unmet needs identified by parents/guardians, and/or persons who work with them, that make it difficult to access the court-based childcare programs</i>
	Location <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lines Security Separate building 	The physical location of the childcare program
	Registration process	Sign in process for parents/guardians to admit their children into the program
	Sign out process	Process to release their child from the program
	Age restriction	Child is outside the 1-12 age restriction for each program
	Child has special needs	Child has needs the staff at the childcare program may not or cannot meet
	Child illness	At the time the parent/guardian needed to access the childcare program the child had an illness that did not allow them to enter the program
	Hours of operation	The time the childcare program opens and closes

	Lunch hour closure	Closure of childcare program between 12:00-1:00 pm
	Conflict with court hours	Closure of the childcare program is before/right at the closure time of the courthouse
	Language	Services at the childcare program are not in the parent/guardian's primary language
	Negative perception	Parents/guardians view the childcare program in a negative way that prevents them from using it. Mistrust of childcare program/staff
	CPS (Child Protective Services)	Parent/guardian fears being reported to Child Protective Services
	Childcare capacity	The childcare program is full and not able to accept another child

Question 4:

How do parents/guardians who use the court-based childcare programs at the Kent and Spokane courts indicate the childcare affected their ability to attend to their court business?

<i>Enable access</i>		<i>Reasons/elements of the childcare programs identified by parents/guardians, and/or those who work with them, that enable access to/make it easier to conduct court business</i>
	Stress Relief	Parents/guardians felt relief/ the absence of worry regarding needing to take care of their children and court business.
	Easier to do business	Parents/guardians felt it was easier to conduct court business with their children at the childcare program.
	Freedom	Parents/guardians had increased freedom to conduct court business.
	Focused	Parents/guardians were able to focus on their court business and not be preoccupied by their children
	Security	Parents/guardians felt a sense of security knowing their children were safe as they conducted court business.

	Convenience	The childcare program was convenient to use, therefore enabling parent/guardian to conduct court business
	No cost	The childcare program being free to use enabled parents/guardians to utilize the program and conduct court business
	Positive staff relationships	Parents/guardians express a sense of positivity towards childcare program staff enabling them to use the program and conduct court business
	Trust	Parents/guardians trust the childcare program staff to watch their children enabling them to use the program and conduct court business
	Language	The childcare program's services are offered in the parent/guardian's primary language enabling utilization and conducting court business

Executive Summary

University of Washington - Community-Oriented Public Health Practice - Section B

PRIMARY EVALUATION QUESTION

**Are the on-site childcare programs
in the state of Washington enabling
access to court business?**

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

The Washington State Supreme Court Gender and Justice Commission is conducting a study focusing on 27 priorities related to the extent and nature of gender bias in the courts today. As part of the grant funding, the Commission requested an evaluation to analyze the process and outcomes of providing childcare for parents/guardians in the justice system as a measure towards gaining gender justice and equitable access to justice through a specific look at The Children's Waiting Room (CWR) in Spokane and The Jon and Bobbe Bridge Childcare Center at the Maleng Regional Justice Center in Kent.

Children's Home Society of Washington (CHSW) is a non-profit organization that offers various services for 30,000 children ages 1-12 and their families annually. CHSW is contracted with the counties to run The Children's Waiting Room in Spokane and the Jon and Bobbe Bridge Childcare Center at the Maleng Regional Justice Center in Kent. Free childcare located within the courts is one proposed solution to foster more equitable representation and access to court services. Each court-based childcare program serves parents of children 1-12 years who are attending to court business at the Kent superior court or any Spokane court. While these programs were established to support parents/guardians and children, as well as improve the efficiency of the courts, their association with access to the courts required evaluation. This evaluation collected and analyzed quantitative and qualitative data in an attempt to better understand some of the processes and outcomes associated with providing free childcare for parents/guardians in the justice system as a measure towards more equitable access and representation to court services.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS

Primary Evaluation Question

Are the on-site childcare programs, at the Children's Waiting Room in Spokane, Washington and the Jon and Bobbe Bridge Drop-In Childcare Center at the Maleng Regional Justice Center in Kent, Washington, enabling access to court business?

Sub-Evaluation Questions

1. How have the Kent and Spokane court-based childcare programs been sharing information about available childcare services to parents/guardians of children 1-12 years old?
2. How have parents/guardians of children 1-12 years old been learning about the childcare programs provided at the Kent and Spokane courts?
3. What are the demographics of parents/guardians of children 1-12 years old who have used the court-based childcare programs in Kent and Spokane?
4. What are the utilization patterns of the Kent and Spokane court-based childcare programs over the course of a day, week, and year? Are there times (of day, week, or year) that are consistently at a higher or lower volume (measured by number of children and length of time at the childcare center)?
5. Which types of court business are being accessed by parents/guardians of children 1-12 years old using the court-based childcare centers at the Kent and Spokane courts?
6. Do barriers accessing the childcare programs prevent parents/guardians from conducting court business? What barriers exist for parents/guardians when accessing the childcare programs?
7. How do parents/guardians who use the court-based childcare programs at the Kent and Spokane courts indicate the childcare affected their ability to attend to their court business?

METHODS

We conducted a convergent mixed-methods evaluation using both retrospective and cross-sectional data, with quantitative and qualitative data collected simultaneously. Cross-sectional data were collected on-site in Kent and Spokane between February 10-27, 2020 through qualitative semi-structured key informant interviews, as well as parent/guardian surveys and registration forms. Historical data were obtained from the CHSW database and consisted of quantitative data related to 2019 use. The combination of qualitative and quantitative data contributed to a rich understanding of who uses the court-based childcare programs, whether parents/guardians perceive access to the childcare programs as improving their ability to conduct court business, as well as perceptions of the childcare programs by users and non-users. Our primary populations of interest to answer our research questions were 1) parents/guardians with court business who use the on-site childcare programs, 2) parents/guardians with court business who do not use the childcare programs, and 3) childcare program staff. We relied on a convenience sample of parents/guardians of children ages 1-12 attending to court business who use and don't use the childcare programs during our February 10-27, 2020 period of data collection. In addition, our team engaged childcare program staff, legal professionals, resource providers, advocates, and other court staff who interact with our populations of interest and were willing to participate in interviews.

RESULTS

37 parents/guardians completed the evaluation survey. The top reasons for attending court were to see a DV advocate (39%) or for another unspecified reason (39%). 11 parents/guardians participated in an interview. The majority learned about the childcare programs from court staff (34%) or by a sign/poster (24%). Word-of-mouth accounted for 13%, which included learning from a family member, friend, or other (non-court staff) person. Most childcare program outreach happens when parent/guardian and child arrive and learn of on-site childcare from a sign or court staff, like a DV advocate or judge.

Barriers to accessing the on-site childcare programs:

Childcare Program Restrictions

age, program capacity, children with special needs

Negative Perception

unfamiliar with childcare room and childcare staff

Cultural Barriers

language, food, customs

Childcare Program Operations

hours (lunch hour closure), registration process, location

"I had to attend the family law orientation and the child care is not open during the time of the FLO seminar... literally the only time they're not open... so, I was excited about, 'Oh, they have childcare' and, then, when I looked it up... I was like, 'Oh, this is actually right in the middle of when they're not open... that doesn't help me [or other parents] at all'..." -Kent parent/guardian

Enablers to accessing court business, as a result of childcare programs:

Quality Childcare Staff: Staff were friendly, welcoming, comforting, experienced providers.

"I feel like the staff is very knowledgeable about children." -Kent parent/guardian

No Cost: Providing childcare service free of charge enabled many parents/guardians to use it.

"[Without the Children's Waiting Room], I would have had to bring her in there with me." -Spokane parent/guardian

Convenience: Drop off process was fast. Location inside the court made it easy (Kent site).

It's just a quick drop in, sign in, give them names, and then head out and get to where I need to. It's not a huge hassle." -Spokane parent/guardian

Security: Many parents/guardians, especially those going to court for custody, were concerned about their child's safety. The security measures taken at the childcare made them comfortable to leave their child there.

"The staff made me feel comfortable leaving my daughter with them with everything being confidential and only I can pick her up or who I write down to get her. Very secure." -Kent parent/guardian

Improved Court Experience: Interviewees reported an improved ability to focus in court, reduced stress, and less distraction for court staff.

"It's made it easier knowing that I don't have to take my little ones into a courthouse when they can just sit and be here because, in the courtroom, they probably wouldn't be very quiet and it's nice knowing that I can focus on what I need to focus on and not have to worry about them... it's nice knowing they can... be preoccupied and not have to worry and be scared that mom's not right there. They focus on fun stuff... [Without the CWR], I would've had to take the kids with me..." -Spokane parent/guardian

Parents/guardians indicated in the survey how the on-site childcare affect their court visit. 40 percent of parents/guardians indicated that they did not have another safe place for their child had there not been an on-site childcare at the court. Over 75 percent of parents/guardians would have had to bring their child with them to court. And, **more than 90 percent of parents/guardians agreed that the on-site childcare program improved their ability to access court services.**

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

- Our findings reveal an opportunity to expand current outreach efforts in order to reach those who may not be accessing the courts due to unmet childcare needs.
- Speaking with parents/guardians who have utilized one of the on-site childcare programs revealed that some aspects of the programs, such as hours of operation, age restrictions, and physical location of the childcare facilities, make the on-site childcare programs difficult to use and/or add stress to their experience at court. Some parents/guardians also indicated a reluctance to leave their children with strangers or expressed doubt as to whether their cultural needs would be accommodated.
- Our findings make it clear that the **parents/guardians who utilize the on-site childcare programs overwhelmingly agree that the service makes it easier for them to access court services and/or conduct court business.** Two of the factors most cited by parents/guardians, and positively associated with improved access to the courts, were the interactions and relationships between parents/guardians and childcare program staff and the childcare programs' convenience of use.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations for the Washington State Supreme Court Gender and Justice Commission

1. Partner with county and state-level initiatives to identify potential funding opportunities, allies, and strategies to increase access to the justice system for parents from marginalized/underrepresented backgrounds.
2. Initiate efforts to support the Children's Home Society of Washington in conducting further research on why various populations are not coming to the courts to attend to court business.

Recommendations for the Children's Home Society of Washington

1. Tailor current, and develop new, outreach strategies promoting the childcare programs to reach parents/guardians who are accessing the courts and the historically underrepresented populations in the justice system that are not accessing the courts.
 - a. Increase knowledge and awareness of the on-site childcare to parents/guardians through avenues outside of the courthouses.
 - b. Increase knowledge and awareness of the on-site childcare to parents/guardians through avenues within the courthouses by improving signage at each courthouse to better call attention to the on-site childcare program.
2. Foster relationships and build trust among current users and underrepresented populations in the justice system, including communities not accessing court services.
3. Assess and adapt new operational strategies to increase the reliability of the childcare programs and promote use.