District 3 Summary of Key Themes

NORTH BEACH, CHINATOWN, TELEGRAPH HILL, NORTH WATERFRONT, FINANCIAL DISTRICT, NOB HILL, RUSSIAN HILL
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This report was prepared by Bright Research Group on behalf of the San Francisco Department of Children, Youth and Their Families (DCYF).

DCYF contracted with Bright Research Group, an independent group, to produce this report. Founded in 2010 by Brightstar Ohlson, Bright Research Group is a community-centered design and research firm based in Oakland, California. Bright Research Group is a women and minority owned firm and certified small local emerging business in Alameda County. Learn more at www.brightresearchgroup.com.

We would like to extend a special thanks to Supervisor Aaron Peskin and his Legislative team, San Francisco Recreation and Park’s Betty Ann Ong Recreation Center, Chinatown YMCA, Intergraphics, Mestiza Catering, Alain McLaughlin Photography, and Katherine O’Toole.

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Suggested Citation: Ohlson, B. et. al (2019) “District Summaries.” Prepared by Bright Research Group for the San Francisco Department of Children, Youth and Their Families.

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On October 24, 2019, the Department of Children, Youth and Their Families (DCYF) convened a family summit to hear about the needs of children, youth, and families. The goal of the summit was to hear feedback from the community in District 3 and learn about the lived experiences of families in the district, including the greatest pain points in their daily lives, what is working, what could work better, and how the City and County of San Francisco could improve their quality of life. The summit began with opening remarks from the supervisor, Aaron Peskin and DCYF staff. Participants listened to a presentation about DCYF and the Community Needs Assessment process, then engaged in breakout table discussions, facilitated by Bright Research Group, for approximately 40 minutes.

Participation in the Family Summit

A total of 72 family members and 13 providers participated in the breakout table discussions. Of the family members who participated, there were 34 youth or transition-age youth and 26 adults caring for children. Participants were broken into seven focus groups—two provider and five family focus groups were held. Three family groups were facilitated in Chinese, two family groups and two provider groups were facilitated in English.

Bright Research Group analyzed data by key theme. DCYF made the decision to redact the names of community-based organizations named by family members and youth as sources of support, out of concern that organizations have different levels of capacity when it comes to organizing their participants to attend community events.
KEY THEMES FROM THE FAMILY BREAKOUTS

A Day in the Life
Participants were asked about the easy and difficult parts of a typical day in the life of their families. The morning time, including getting up early and out the door, was the most stressful time of day for families. Challenges with transportation were stressors experienced by many families. Getting children to school was described as difficult due to overcrowded and unreliable public transportation. Some Chinese family members noted the difficulties of navigating buses because of language barriers. They suggested that public-transit stops be announced in Chinese. Several families commented on the importance and ease of living within walking distance to school and work, and one family member felt that having access to bike rentals throughout the city made travel easier.

Neighborhood safety was also a concern for families. Some families described the stress of walking through neighborhoods with high levels of drug use and blight and being accosted by aggressive individuals. Families felt concerned about an increase in car break-ins, robberies, and dangerous conditions for pedestrians due to ride-share vehicles.

Childcare was a common concern for family members with caregiving responsibilities. They described the commonality of two parents working long hours and commented on the importance of access to high-quality, affordable childcare and before- and after-school care. One parent commented that knowing that kids are in good hands eases the stress of the day. The summer was described as an especially stressful time due to the lack of affordable program options.

Youth and transition-age youth focused their discussions on school-related stressors. During the school day, youth felt stressed by early school start times, too many exams, and a lack of quality lunches. They described teachers as overworked and believed that school staff need training in cultural competency. One youth commented on the stress of dealing with structural oppression, racism, ageism, gendered violence, and poverty. Another young person felt that schools need to focus on enforcing Title IX and described being a victim of and witness to many incidents of verbal-based and social-media-based sexual harassment by other students. Youth
reported feeling supported by positive relationships with friends during the day. One youth appreciated having access to ethnic-studies classes.

**Needs of Children, Youth, and Families**

Youth and transition-age youth focused their conversations on the need to improve public transportation, mental health and wellness supports, and issues of community safety. Young people expressed significant frustration with the unreliability and overcrowding on public buses. They also expressed concerns about getting jumped or robbed while commuting and expressed a need for robbery prevention, response, and reporting information. Youth named Sunnydale, Excelsior, and Market Street as particularly dangerous areas. They also expressed concerns about safety at school and recommended that San Francisco work on advancing gun-control laws. One young person described how a shooting in front of Lowell High School negatively impacted student well-being. Young people expressed a need for more mental health supports for youth and parents. Young people valued supportive teachers, counselors, and coaches and expressed appreciation for the opportunity to build community with peers and program providers with shared cultural backgrounds during after-school activities.

A large group of youth were affiliated with one community-based organization advocated for updates to equipment, docks, and storage facilities for dragon-boat racing at Lake Merced. They also described staff at this organization as helpful and supportive. Other needs expressed by youth included an expansion in affordable housing, more access to classes teaching English to immigrants, and increased access to A–G required classes at school.

Families were concerned about overcrowded housing, the need for more public spaces, and multigenerational / culturally relevant programming. They described the increasing commonality of multigenerational families living in cramped and unsanitary conditions within single-occupancy residency units. These living conditions do not provide privacy or a quiet space for youth to complete homework, create tensions among family members, and negatively impact quality of life. Cooking and showering are difficult because kitchens and bathrooms are shared by multiple families. Caregivers pointed out that youth prefer staying out late to going home to undesirable living conditions. Families explained that access to additional public spaces, including community centers and parks, would help ease the stress of living in crowded units and provide space for kids to complete homework.

One youth said that playing basketball helps him release stress. He described the difficulty of finding open basketball courts and noted that access to additional basketball courts would help him live a healthier life. Family members also described a need for safe spaces and programs for seniors who speak Chinese. Some families appreciated the extended hours and inclusive cultural offerings of local libraries. Others appreciated the free museums and noted that many of the playgrounds in the city are in good condition. Families also named a variety of community-based providers and programs as important community assets but noted that staff turnover is too high due to low salaries.
Caregivers described feeling stressed and burnt out from trying to balance work and family life and believe that there is a need for more social supports, including culturally competent and responsive social workers. Chinese immigrant parents named not being able to assist their children with their homework as a stressor and described a need for free high-quality tutoring.

**KEY THEMES FROM PROVIDER BREAK-OUTS**

Providers focused their discussion on program funding, issues of overcrowded housing and food insecurity, mental health and wellness, and public safety. Providers expressed concern about the high rates of stress among youth and families and advocated for more support for culturally relevant mental health supports, including multilingual therapists. Providers linked family mental health and wellness to the issue of cramped living conditions within single-occupancy-residency units and noted the frequency with which multigenerational families were living in small housing units. Like families, providers expressed the need for more community spaces to ease the stress of tight living conditions. Providers also noted issues with public transportation and neighborhood safety. They explained that the city is a difficult place for youth and families to navigate due to unreliable public transportation and recommended free public transportation for youth enrolled in public schools. Providers expressed concern for the safety of youth traveling in San Francisco and cited drug activity on the streets, littered streets in Chinatown, and poor air quality due to construction and smoking.

Providers stressed the importance of community programs to supporting youth and families and advocated for increased program funding and access to capacity- and skill-building opportunities for frontline staff. Other issues discussed by providers include concern that Chinatown is being gentrified by tech workers; youth have difficulty communicating with their parents due to cultural differences; additional supports are needed for children with special needs; and many parents have to work multiple jobs and have no time to participate in program.
PARTICIPANT QUOTES

“When I first came to America, I had no friends and did not know where to go afterschool. My counselor told me about <an afterschool program>. I went, and it really helped me.”
—Youth, D3

“Chinatown does not have enough community centers for children who live in rental rooms.”
—Parent, D3

“I had a kid in an after-school program refuse to go home. He just wanted to do his homework because he knew if he went home, he wouldn’t have the support or environment to get it done.”
—Provider, D3

“Housing issues can exacerbate a lot of other issues and conflict. With three generations living in a small unit, a lot of problems arise.”
—Provider, D3