District 4 Summary of Key Themes
CENTRAL/OUTER SUNSET, PARKSIDE
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D4 (Central/Outer Sunset & Parkside)

On November 2, 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 gather feedback from the community in District 4 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 should improve their quality of life. The summit began with opening remarks from Supervisor Gordon Mar 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 50 minutes.

Participation in the Family Summit

A total of 12 family members and 10 providers participated in the breakout table discussions groups. Of the family members, 11 were caring for children. Participants were broken into four focus groups—one provider breakout group and three family-member groups. One family group was facilitated in English, as was the provider group. One participant spoke Chinese and worked one-on-one with a facilitator, as did a mother who spoke Russian. There was no Russian interpreter in attendance, and the mother requested that her daughter act as her interpreter.

![Figure 1: Ethnicity of D4 Attendees (n=21)*](image1)

![Figure 2: D4 Attendees by Home Zip Code (n=21)*](image2)

*Data in figures includes all community members who registered at the summit. Some participants did not register. Some attendees did not participate in the breakout discussions. Registrants were asked to select all applicable race/ethnicity categories.

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 children out the door, was the most stressful time of day for family members with caregiving responsibilities. For many, transportation, family support, and childcare were identified as key factors impacting the ease or difficulty of their day-to-day lives. A stressor experienced by many involved getting their children to and from schools. Families described public transportation as unreliable and discussed the difficulty of commuting via car due to traffic congestion. One senior appreciated the free bus fare available to seniors. Reliable childcare, including preschool and after-school programs, were described as essential by caregivers. One mom explained that she would not be able to afford preschool in San Francisco without financial support from her mother. Families described a lack of after-school programs for high school youth. Improved public transportation, parking, and affordable, high-quality childcare would improve quality of life for the families.

After-school time was stressful for one immigrant mother, who explained the difficulty she experienced in helping her children with their homework. Other caregivers described the stress of getting children back home from school during the evening commute. The late evening was seen as a time to relax and unwind for many.

Needs of Families

Families focused their discussion on mental health supports and the need for increased and coordinated care for vulnerable populations. Families described the need for school-based mental health supports for youth. One parent with a high-school-age child described the frequency of serious mental health issues and incidents among her child’s peers. Caregivers also linked time spent outside to preventative mental health and cited a need for more outdoor community spaces. Families described a lack of coordinated services throughout the city and called for increased agency collaboration. Services for children with special needs were described as particularly uncoordinated. Families called on increased supports for youth in foster care and described the city as too unaffordable for foster families who have been pushed out of San Francisco.
One mother, who recently immigrated to the US, stressed the need for affordable housing. She explained that her family lives in a church, emphasizing the need for more supports for immigrant families, including homework help for her children.

Other needs cited by parents include support for seniors, including visits by social workers, supports for youth looking for jobs, supports for justice-system-involved youth, improved road safety and free bus service for youth.

**KEY THEMES FROM PROVIDER BREAK-OUTS**

Providers focused their discussions on the need for holistic, culturally competent mental health supports for youth, affordability of therapeutic supports, supports for parents, and equity issues. Several providers stressed the growing need for mental health interventions among youth and described their concerns about the current approach to mental health as Western centered and over dependent on medicating youth. They explained that the current model of service involves stigmatizing and over-diagnosing young people without consideration of environmental factors, systemic issues, or cultural context. Providers explained that incarcerated youth are particularly vulnerable to the negative impacts of a Westernized, biomedical model of mental health. They stressed the importance of moving to a community-based, whole-person model of care.

Many providers expressed a need for increased program supports for parents and caregivers. They expressed appreciation for DCYF funding and supports for children and youth but stressed the importance of offering supports to parents. Providers explained that immigrant parents need supports with navigating school systems and that families from diverse backgrounds are struggling to parent in the age of technology. They explained that a significant amount of parent-child tension involves disagreements about the use of technology and described a need for digital safety and parent-empowerment programs.

Providers expressed concerns about the affordability of living in San Francisco. They discussed how issues of affordability were severely impacting families and youth involved in the foster-care system as well as transition-age youth. Providers explained that due to a lack of placement options, foster children from San Francisco are regularly placed outside the city, causing impacted youth to experience negative feelings of displacement and
issues with separation. They also expressed concern that there are no residential group homes in San Francisco for girls. Providers discussed the difficulties of finding affordable housing for transition-age youth and pointed out the importance of housing with respect to stability in the lives of vulnerable young people. Providers reported that many transition-age youths are sleeping on friends’ couches.

Multiple providers expressed concern about DCYF’s current approach to funding. They described it as overly prescriptive and restrictive. They explained that the current model of funding requires them to twist their programs to fit DCYF strategies as opposed to creating programs that fit people. They described DCYF’s food program as overly complicated and explained that the formula for calculating cost is burdensome and difficult, causing many providers to look for other funding sources to cover youth meals. They explained that increased collaboration between DCYF and community-based organizations is needed.

Other issues identified by providers included: the need for increased cross-cultural experiences for youth across the city; the need for more leadership development and community organizing programs; the need for more outdoor activities, after-school care, and summer programs; supports for English language learners; supports for middle-income families and making the use of City Parks and Recreation space free for community-based organizations.

**Participant Quotes**

“Not a lot of support for kids with incarcerated parents. Even thinking about foster care kids. There is so much stigma around this, so much shame, invisibility. Just talking about it so that it is more and more out of shadows. People who are impacted by that who are also victims.”

—Parent, D4

“When kids grow up they need a place to live. I have rent control, that is the only reason I can stay here. But what happens when most of your income goes to that?”

—Parent, D4

“The last funding cycle was a lot of youth. I want to see more for parents... More workshops for parents on parenting skills, especially for parents of teens.”

—Provider, D4

“The safety of being out on the street is not what it was when we were young. When youth leave programs, I’m worried about their safety, including safety at the hands of police. Need safe places for them when they go out and also safety getting home. This is a huge concern.”

—Provider, D4