

**THE BUILDING CONNECTIONS FOR VALLEY FAMILIES PROJECT—EXPANSION**

**SERVICE PROVIDER COMMENTS**

“We are missing instrumental supports that address poverty, parental stress, mental health challenges and everyday parenting”

“Growing problem as research is showing that we didn’t have enough service and support before Covid and it will be even worse after for some families “

“How can we be accepting, knowledgeable, effectively support and be sensitive to cultural and other diversities”

**Union/Fanny Bay/Royston**

- \*Noticeable absence of programs/services/supports
- \*Informal systems also lacking—‘no opportunities to meet people’
- \*Families value community events and local activities
- \* Families strained/limited by having to access everything in town
- \*Socioeconomic, geographic & transportation factors are significant

**Cumberland**

- \*Stronger sense of community and connectedness w/in Cumb—mostly positive perception
- \*Several program options and active community spaces/resources
- \*Desire for more outdoor and toddler programs
- \*Notable lacking of informal support/resources needs identified
- \*Housing and cost of living concerns

**Universal Experiences**

- \* Big concerns regarding child development, dealing with behaviours and children lacking social opportunities
- \* Lack of strong and deep, supportive social connections for parents (moms emphasized)
- \* Significant parental stress and anxiety—lack of support and resources—feeling ‘stretched so thin’
- \* Need for education, resources and opportunities to develop parenting skills, manage behaviours and to support child development
- \* Desire for more informal social opportunities/drop in programs for children and parents
- \* Significant challenges accessing CHILDCARE

**Denman & Hornby Island**

- \*Established community organizations/programs/supports specific to the Islands
- \*Lacking in activities/child programs on Islands
- \*Families missing community events and gatherings frequent prior to Covid
- \*Perception that Islands are welcoming and friendly but deeper connections are lacking
- \*Socio/Econ & Geographic factors are significant

**Courtenay City/ West**

- \*Good programs & services—excepting those shutdown for Covid
- \*Need more supports for children with special needs, cultural connections, newcomers and single parents were identified multiple times
- \*Greater diversity of responses on neighbourhood experiences and perception of informal supports (some considered them as a strength and some as a weakness)
- \*Desire to utilize or establish more outdoor gathering spaces to support connections
- \*Socioeconomic realities more relevant/impactful

**Comox/ Valleyview**

- \*Many families are accessing services, programs and community resources
- \*Several new Canadians, many experiencing isolation and cultural challenges
- \*Desire for more activities/programs for 1-3 year olds, programs/resources for Dads, online connection, and neighborhood spaces for families to connect
- \*Socio/econ & geographic factors noticeably absent