Family Support: Dependent Care

CONTEXT

Dependent care relates to the care required by infants, children, youth, the disabled and the frail elderly who are incapable of living safely and adequately on their own. Both US-born and immigrant families in Santa Clara County are adversely impacted by the dearth of affordable community resources for dependent care. However, the plight of immigrant families is overwhelmingly more pronounced in all areas related to dependent care. Childcare for immigrants in Santa Clara County is often too expensive and not always adequate. Frequently, care is perceived as inadequate. Some immigrant parents would prefer immigrant-sensitive childcare centers that take into account diverse cultural perspectives and where staff can communicate with children in their first languages. General lack of childcare centers and shortage of childcare workers especially affects immigrants who often do not have extensive local networks from which to receive support.

After-school programs specifically for immigrant youth are also in short supply. Immigrant youth often feel isolated in spite of the great potential and positive energy that could be directed to community activism, art, cultural, sports and other activities. Existing schools, community, cultural and youth centers, as well as immigrant organizations, need more funds to provide a variety of after-school programs and become able to serve more children and youth.

Senior services and centers do not always take into account the needs of immigrant elderly, especially monolingual elderly. There is a great need to either expand senior care services to many more immigrant groups and make them culturally sensitive or to implement the On Lok model that could include many different immigrant seniors under the same umbrella.

New studies indicate that, in general and in most parts of the country, nursing homes provide extremely uneven care, and are often dangerously understaffed. SJMN 7/23/00 In the county, some positive models to look at include Yu-Ai Kai Senior Center and MACSA Adult Day Center in San Jose, successfully serving Japanese and Latino immigrant seniors.

Community programs that specifically address the needs of the disabled immigrants are nonexistent at the moment. Disabled immigrants have special needs because of additional barriers they face. Specific education and services for disabled immigrants are needed in Santa Clara County.
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Finding 1: For immigrants there is lack of childcare centers at work-sites, childcare centers open in the evenings and on weekends, and childcare centers for sick children.

The focus group with Latinas on CalWORKs showed that there is a need for childcare at night. These women said that it was hard to have night classes or work at night because of the lack of childcare options. They emphasized that training centers with childcare open in the evening were very needed. In their opinion it was necessary to have ongoing CalWORKs support in order to keep jobs. Help that they are receiving before they get hired is very good, but Latinas need help with childcare even after they find jobs because these jobs do not pay enough and they often work in shifts.

The focus group with Moslem women on CalWORKs also documented a need for childcare at job sites. Besides childcare centers at work sites, the focus group with Indian immigrants proposed that community service centers get more funds so that they can organize affordable childcare.

The random sample survey documented that 14% of immigrants and 15% of the US-born who responded to this question had problems with schedules. This was more a problem for the Chinese and Filipino than for other groups. Research into gaps in services and best practices also documented the need for childcare centers that can be open longer hours.

Recommendations for Finding 1:

- Create more job-site childcare centers and provide more tax incentives for this purpose.
- Extend the schedules of existing childcare centers to include evening and weekend hours.
- Establish more childcare centers for sick children.
- In working to meet the above, pay special attention to the cultural and language needs of immigrants, especially immigrants whose English skills are limited or poor.
- Hire bilingual and bicultural staff in expanding the above childcare sites.
- Ensure that all immigrants are getting information and help in order to receive childcare services.
Finding 2: There is not enough affordable childcare for immigrants and those who need affordable childcare the most have the least knowledge of English and existing resources.

Many focus groups expressed that there is a need for low cost and immigrant-sensitive childcare solutions. The focus group with Ethiopian immigrants indicated that additional affordable childcare spaces are needed, and they emphasized that this is a critical issue for single mothers. The focus group with Vietnamese women on CalWORKs explained that they needed affordable childcare after they start working, not only while they are on CalWORKs and before they get jobs. They proposed a system where they could receive free childcare for one year, so that they can get additional training and better paying jobs. The focus group conducted with Latino low-wage workers also showed that more low cost or sliding scale childcare is needed.

Immigrants Building Community (IBC) expressed the same problem. The Iranian IBC group talked about the high cost of childcare and distrust of non-family childcare providers. The Latino group identified the need for low cost childcare and proposed solutions to encourage mothers to open private in-home childcare centers.

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<th>WHAT IMMIGRANTS SAY ABOUT THE ISSUE OF CHILDCARE</th>
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<td>“We need the safety of knowing our children are well taken care of when we leave them in nurseries and childcare centers. We need to know they’ll be in a place where they can play and learn, and they won’t be left alone.” <em>Monica, a Latina receiving CalWORKs</em></td>
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<td>“Traditionally Iranian families do not trust outside family childcare facilities. Immigrant parents are used to providing childcare and this has its own implications and problems.” <em>Iranian Report, IBC</em></td>
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<td>“Sometimes when we need to work at night we can’t because we don’t have quality childcare where we know the kids will be okay.” <em>Helen, from Mexico</em></td>
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<td>“How can someone find a job if the mothers are preoccupied with the children and can’t focus on work?” <em>Sylvia, a CalWORKs recipient</em></td>
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The random sample survey shows that immigrants are much more likely to need childcare services than the US-born. Among those who answered the question, immigrant respondents needed childcare at a rate over twice as high as the rate of need of the US-born (13.5% as compared to 6.4%). Mexican and Chinese immigrants expressed the most need with about 20% from both groups needing childcare. Of those who expressed a need for childcare, only 3.8% of immigrants and 4.1% of US-born received services. Although the Chinese and Mexican groups expressed the greatest need, only 1.6% Chinese and 6.7% Mexican immigrants had received childcare services in the past.
Child Care Needed and Received (Random Sample)

Childcare centers are not used very often: respondents indicated that only 11.2% of immigrant kids and 15.9% of US-born were going to childcare centers.

Child Care Use: Immigrants and US-Born (Random Sample)

Among immigrant groups, Chinese and Indian immigrants were the most likely to send their kids to these centers. Vietnamese, Filipino and especially Mexican respondents were the least likely to send their children to childcare centers.

The public assistance recipients survey showed that immigrants from this group are highly unlikely to send their children to childcare centers. Only 6.8% of all immigrants on public assistance surveyed reported that they had children in childcare centers. A key reason was the cost. Fifty percent (50%) of immigrants and 58% of US-born who responded said that childcare was too expensive. For the Mexican public benefits group, 70% indicated that childcare is too expensive.

Immigrants are also more than two times as likely as the US-born to see the lack of affordable childcare as a barrier to receiving education, services, and benefits. (13.5% to 5.1%). Mexican respondents were six times as likely as the US-born to see this as a problem.
The random sample survey showed that among immigrants who had enough information about low-cost childcare programs, the majority evaluated their English skills as excellent, good or average. Among those whose English skills were evaluated as poor or none only 31.7% responded that they had enough information about low cost childcare.

A similar correlation was registered with regard to level of English and those receiving childcare services. About 84% of immigrants with excellent, good and average English skills have received the services, whereas only 16% of immigrants with poor or no English skills had received childcare services.

**Recommendations for Finding 2:**

- Open and fund more affordable and subsidized childcare sites with multi-cultural capacities.
- Open centers where immigrant parents can work and bring their children for discounted fees.
- Create immigrant-sensitive childcare centers, including immigrant-initiated centers.
- Continue supporting more immigrants to open their own in-home childcare centers, in combination with ECE training in their own language or in English and their language and with small business loan programs.
- Improve community education so that immigrants who are not proficient in English or whose English skills are poor obtain sufficient information and services.

**Finding 3: After-school programs for immigrants and culturally appropriate child and youth services are severely lacking.**

Many focus groups pointed out the need for after-school programs and youth services. Latina immigrant women expressed the need for childcare, summer schools and extracurricular activities for all kids. They proposed that schools be funded so that this programming become available to low-income immigrant children. Cambodian immigrants talked about the need for more gang and drug prevention programs as well as community education. Ethiopian immigrants asked for more funds for Ethiopian Community Services to organize dependent care for youth, children, and seniors. Korean immigrants also talked about the need for immigrant youth to have their own places and centers for recreation and after-school activities. Laotian immigrants were concerned about the lack of culturally appropriate youth services and after-school activities.

Immigrants Building Community confirmed the need for after-school programs and youth services for immigrant children. The Latino group especially expressed this need.

The random sample survey pointed out the language and cultural obstacles to immigrant youth and child services. Language difficulties are seen as a barrier to accessing these
services, especially for Mexican immigrants. Cultural differences are considered a problem with child and youth care for 15% of all immigrant respondents, especially for Indo-Americans.

**Recommendations for Finding 3:**

- Establish more culturally and linguistically diverse after-school programs for immigrant children and youth.
- Support educational policies for schools to provide quality low-cost or free after-school programs for immigrant youth and children.

**Finding 4:** There are not enough services for immigrant seniors and not enough information about existing centers for LEP seniors.

Korean immigrants and immigrants in IBC talked about the need for senior centers for immigrants. The Iranian group emphasized the isolation of seniors and the need for senior centers or specific services for Iranian immigrants. The Vietnamese group said that an easily accessible Vietnamese senior center is needed.

The random sample survey also recorded a substantial need for immigrant-specific senior care services, with 9.2% of immigrants and 6.5% of US-born respondents needing senior care. The Chinese (16.9%) and Vietnamese (10.8%) especially expressed this need. Of those who needed senior care services, 3% of immigrants and 5.9% of US-born respondents said that they had received those services in the past.

**Senior Care Needed and Received (Random Sample)**

![Bar chart showing senior care needed and received by country and total U.S., with percentages for each category: Need Care for Elderly and Received Care for Elderly.](chart)

- **Mexico:** 3.5% Need Care, 2.4% Received Care
- **Vietnam:** 10.8% Need Care, 5.6% Received Care
- **Philippines:** 7.1% Need Care, 1.2% Received Care
- **China:** 16.9% Need Care, 3.2% Received Care
- **India:** 8.8% Need Care, 1.7% Received Care
- **Immigrants Total:** 9.2% Need Care, 3.0% Received Care
- **U.S.:** 6.5% Need Care, 5.9% Received Care
The random sample survey showed that immigrants who evaluated their English skills as excellent, good or average were much more likely to know about elderly care programs than those whose English skills were rated as poor or none. Immigrants with no English skills were likely to know about these programs in only 14% of the cases.

Best practices research found that On Lok Senior Services provides comprehensive one-stop senior care for immigrants and is a program that should be emulated. Located in San Francisco and serving 800 seniors, On Lok will soon expand to the Palo Alto area. On Lok provides a spectrum of multicultural, multilingual care for immigrants from Russia, the Philippines, Central and South America, Korea, Italy, and Mexico.

Elements of their success include in-home service delivery of therapeutic meals for homebound seniors with special diets, seven neighborhood sites open six days a week with hot meal programs, social service assistance ranging from translation to case management, limited housing, 24-hour MD on-call services, free transportation, prescription drugs, occupational therapy, citizenship assistance, referral services, and intergenerational programming.

Each week, children from WU Yee Children’s Services and John Yehall Chin Elementary School, including orthopedic students of a special education class, go to On Lok’s Montgomery Center to visit seniors. Together, they exercise, eat meals, celebrate holidays and birthdays, create art projects, tell stories and sing.

**Recommendations for Finding 4:**

- Additional resources should be allocated to existing immigrant organizations serving seniors and for new senior centers that serve immigrant seniors. The “On Lok prototype” as a model for expansion of the expansion of On Lok-type programs is necessary in Santa Clara County. The comprehensive model deserves to be emulated. Kijana, a 49-year-old Bosnian teacher, suggested as part of IBC that a community center could provide a place for both childcare and elderly care. It would address the isolation of the elderly and at the same time retain the culture and language for children. Youth could also become involved and build a real community of caring.
- Senior services need to take into account the cultural, language and transportation needs of seniors, as well as geographic location and housing patterns.
- Providers need to pay special attention to immigrants who are not proficient in English or whose English skills are poor, and develop special programs for them. It is important to ensure that these immigrants are getting information and help in order to receive elderly care services.
Finding 5: There is a need for services dedicated to disabled immigrants in Santa Clara County, including legal services for disability issues.

The random sample survey documented a significant need for disabled care for immigrants. Six percent of immigrants and 4% of US-born respondents indicated that they needed care for a disabled person in their family. The need was most pronounced in the Chinese and Filipino communities. Of those who responded that they had received disabled care services in the past, 3% were immigrants and 5.6% were US-born.

Immigrants participating in Immigrants Building Community talked about specific disability-related issues in their communities. Iranians stated that disabled are is done among family members and that there is not support group to ease the pressure on the provider. Latinos expressed the opinion that care centers are too expensive to use. Participants also stated that insurance companies pressure injured immigrant workers to return to work before they are adequately recovered, making injuries worse. They complained that disability insurance is woefully inadequate to cover even basic expenses.

Many immigrant respondents expressed a need for legal services concerning disability issues and access issues. Access to public places and services is required for immigrant disabled persons under the American Disabilities Act, not just for disabled persons. Over 9% of immigrants indicated they need legal services in relation to disability or access. Filipino and Mexican groups indicated the highest percentages of those who need legal services for the disabled. Almost 13% of Filipinos and over 10% of Mexican respondents who needed any legal services checked this option.
Best practices research suggests that Santa Clara County should consider stashing a program like that of Protection and Advocacy, Inc. in Oakland. Protection and Advocacy is a special center for disabled immigrants where education and training is offered in different languages.

**Recommendations for Finding 5:**

- Develop specific services for disabled immigrants.
- Set up an office in Santa Clara County like Protection and Advocacy Inc. of Oakland or assist them in setting up a branch office.
- Expand linguistically appropriate legal services to disabled immigrants so that they can receive disability insurance, know their legal rights, and enjoy the protections of the American Disabilities Act.

**Finding 6: More than the US-born, immigrants want family members to provide in-home care for other family members who are disabled or elderly. However, the family members providing in-home care need help and services themselves, in their native languages.**

The random sample survey showed that immigrants prefer in-home disabled care services provided by a family member more than in-home disabled care provided by a trained caregiver. The US-born respondents, on the other hand, prefer in-home care by trained caregivers first. Of those answering the question, immigrants preferred in-home care providers by family members at a rate of 36%, versus 12% for the US-born, a three times higher rate for immigrants. Only 4% of US-born and 7% of immigrant respondents said that they would prefer institutional care for a disabled family member.

On a related question, about 4% of immigrants who responded to the questions of barriers to receipt of education and services indicated that they cannot leave their homes because they are needed to care for a disabled or elderly family member. Almost 7% of Filipino immigrant respondents saw this situation as a very important barrier to receiving services, education and public benefits for themselves.

**Recommendations for Finding 6:**

- Expand the number of multi-lingual caregiver positions for assisting immigrant homebound disabled and frail elderly.
- Train more in-home support care providers with language capacity.
- Ensure a living wage for in-home support services to attract more people to become providers.
- Develop programs to better identify paid and unpaid immigrant in-home care providers so that they can take advantage of existing educational programs and services (e.g. distance learning opportunities for homebound caregivers).
- Provide more classes for immigrant caregivers, including in their own language, to learn how to take care of themselves (respite care).
- Expand policies to allow employees to use accumulated sick leave to take care of sick, disabled or elderly family members.

**WHAT IMMigrants SAY…**

**MEXICAN SENIORS TALK ABOUT GETTING OLD**

All: “We are very afraid to become really old, like 90 years old.”
Woman: “When I reach an age when I can’t move, I’ve told my children it’s better to go to a place where they’ll help me.”
Woman: “The fear I have about getting old is to be alone.”
Maria: “I want to die with my husband or die first. I don’t want to be alone, because I won’t be able to help myself. My four kids tell me to sell my house, but I say no, because I don’t want to be six months with one child and six months with another. When God doesn’t allow me to move anymore then I’ll go to different children’s homes or go into a rest home.”
Woman: “The important qualities of a rest home are cleanliness, security, and responsibility.”
Man: “When a man retires at 65 and he gets Social Security and a union pension, he can live at the Villages, where there are stores, a doctor and nurse 24 hours per day. It costs about $1500/month. Only those with a union pension can afford it.”