Adult and Family Literacy in Eden Prairie: Assessment Findings

EDEN PRAIRIE SCHOOLS Community Education

Findings from research into resources, needs, and barriers for family literacy programming December 2018

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- Metro South Adult Basic Education
- Mothers Tutoring Academy
- All survey respondents
- Shakopee PACE Program

Executive Summary

Assessment goals and methods

This report consolidates the results of research into needs and resources in Eden Prairie for accessible adult and early childhood literacy education; it aims to inform design of a family literacy program piloting in January 2019.

Research collected data from four general groups of people: staff of community organizations, existing family literacy programs, and Eden Prairie Schools, and other residents of Eden Prairie. Informal interviews, focus groups, surveys, and observation were used to gather data. Secondary sources like census data, publicly-available research into education needs for immigrant populations, and the 2017 Community Needs, Resources, and Gaps in Services assessment conducted by Community Education were also considered.

Informal interviews were conducted with 12 community organization leaders, 11 staff members of Eden Prairie schools, and three managers of family literacy programs as well as four other family literacy program staff, adding up to 19 interviews with 30 individuals. Similar questions were asked within each group of respondents (see appendix A, pp. 30-32). A number of more informal conversations with community organization staff also informed the assessment, as did group discussions at two outreach sites: twice at the first and once at the second. The majority of these group members were Somali or East Indian, and all discussion group members had one or more children under the age of five.

Observation took place at four existing outreach classes, two library events, multiple academic support and parent engagement nights, and three family literacy programs in cities other than Eden Prairie. Data and insights gathered from these events have informed the approach taken to other information, and while specific details are sometimes cited, observation plays into the assessment mainly on a background level. A survey was sent out in digital form to all current preschool parents as well as to parents of preschoolers at Lower Campus in paper form (see Appendix B for a sample survey). It was also administered at Eagles Study Sessions, a homework help program serving mostly students from immigrant families, and three out of four existing Early Childhood and Family Education outreach classes. Preschool parents were sent paper and digital copies in English, Spanish, and Somali, and copies in each of these languages were available at each site surveyed. Finally, the survey was administered door-to-door at the Prairie Meadows apartment complex as part of an effort to garner more responses from Somali families, who were reported by interviewees as one of the groups most in need of adult English education. In total, 123 individuals completed the survey: 12 digitally and 111 on paper.

Most survey respondents reported speaking Somali, one of several East Indian languages, or English at home. The survey was also made available to a broader range of the Somali population in Eden Prairie than to community members from other ethnic groups through surveys administered at the Prairie Meadows housing complex. While demographic and anecdotal data show a high potential need for family literacy programming among Somali residents, conducting further research with other populations would give a more complete picture of needs and resources in Eden Prairie more broadly.

Limitations of the assessment as a whole are also primarily related to the limited sample of respondents. Conversations and interviews considered as part of the assessment may not accurately represent the entire community of Eden Prairie. Most interviewees and focus group members were also either White or Somali, due both to established connections in the community and to needs expressed by Somali residents and community organization members who work with Somalis.

Key findings

The assessment demonstrated a specific need for English instruction among Somali mothers of young children in Eden Prairie as well as examining both resources and barriers for residents related to learning English. The assessment also showed a difference in community organizations' and residents' perceptions of the greatest obstacles to attendance. While community organizations and residents both considered transportation and childcare barriers to participating in English classes, they differed in which obstacles they considered to be the largest barriers. Organizations were far more likely to mention transportation, and residents were far more likely to mention childcare.

Across all residents surveyed, Somali mothers reported the greatest needs for English instruction and demonstrated the greatest interest in taking classes. Despite barriers to participating in English classes—including a lack of English classes with childcare in Eden Prairie and available to all residents—these women are enrolling in and taking English classes as well as asking for more opportunities to learn English. Current opportunities to take English classes through Metro South do not fulfill many Eden Prairie residents' needs for or interest in learning English.

Interviews with community organizations demonstrated a number of resources for adult literacy and English instruction and a dedication to Eden Prairie families among those who provided these services. However, these interviews also demonstrated a lack of awareness about resources for learning English among other community organizations. In addition to findings about populations with the most reported need and perceptions of barriers, the assessment demonstrated that Community Education's engagement efforts have resulted in a number of connections with Somali and East Indian families with young children and relatively few with Hispanic and Latino families. Existing connections between Community Education and the community, both in terms of community organizations and residents themselves, were overwhelmingly with White, Somali, and South Asian individuals. Despite much higher representation of Spanish-speaking residents among preschool parents, too, only four survey respondents reported speaking Spanish at home, leading to a lack of survey data about these residents in comparison to Somali and East Indian families. These findings suggest that further research into needs and resources for the Spanish-speaking population in Eden Prairie is needed in order to better understand and serve these residents.

Finally, the assessment revealed a potential need among a large proportion of Somali adults for basic literacy instruction, coupled with a lack of data about the prevalence of pre- or non-literacy among these residents and a lack of basic literacy classes in the city. Conversations with Eden Prairie Schools' Somali cultural liaisons, observations at outreach sites and community events, and requests for accessible basic literacy classes suggest that a substantial portion of that population may lack basic literacy skills. Moreover, the nature of non-literacy means that residents affected are far less likely than literate residents to provide input in writing-based methods of research. A key finding of the assessment, then, is the need for better and more inclusive methods of research to analyze the scope of the need for basic literacy instruction in Eden Prairie and for enhanced systems of support for non-literate residents.

Eden Prairie at a glance: demographics related to family literacy Eden Prairie and Eden Prairie Schools

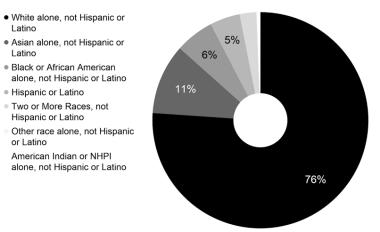
In order to better understand potential need for family literacy programming in Eden Prairie, a number of demographic factors were taken into account. Relationships between race and poverty, statistics related to education, and percentages of foreign-born and recently-arrived foreign-born residents were the main data analyzed as factors that might impact benefit from family literacy programming.

Each family's needs are different, and factors that might influence enrollment in or benefit from a family literacy program—like connections to friends and family in the area, similarity of native culture or language to American culture and language, or education in other countries—were not considered. However, the chosen demographic data were selected in order to give a general description of our community in relation to needs for family literacy.

Racial demographics and poverty by race

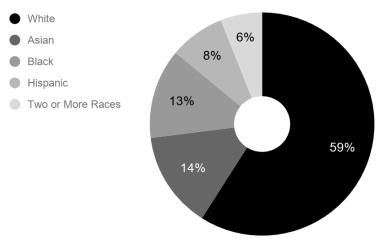
While the city of Eden Prairie's racial demographics are still fairly homogeneous compared to more urban areas, they have also been rapidly diversifying over the past few decades; student demographics within Eden Prairie Schools also represent a more racially and ethnically diverse population than that of the city. According to American Community Survey estimates from 2016, 80% of Eden Prairie residents are White and 11% are Asian, while Black or African American residents, Hispanic or Latino residents, and other racial and ethnic groups together make up around 9% of the population (U.S. Census Bureau, ACS 2016 estimates). These numbers have changed over the past few decades. In 2000, 92% of city residents were White: 2016's estimates of 80% represent a change of nearly 12 percentage points over 16 years (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census).

Figure 1: Eden Prairie City demographics by race and Hispanic or Latino origin, Social Explorer; ACS 2016 Estimates.



Minnesota Department of Education data for the district shows further diversification among Eden Prairie Schools' students, who are are 59% White, 14% Asian, 13% Black or African American, and 8% Hispanic or Latino. Individual schools' demographics also vary: more than 50% of students at Eden Lake, Oak Point, and Forest Hills are students of color, while schools with the lowest attendance rates by students of color, Eagle Heights and Eden Prairie High School, are attended by 25% and 35% non-White students respectively (Minnesota Report Card).

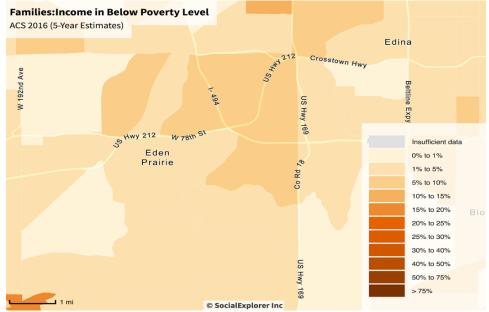
Figure 2: Eden Prairie Schools demographics by race/ethnicity for the 2017-18 school year, Minnesota Report Card.



Statistics for poverty in Eden Prairie also show rates lower than county averages, though these rates increase within certain racial and ethnic groups. In Eden Prairie, 3% of families with children under 18 live in poverty in Eden Prairie, compared to nearly 8% in Hennepin County (U.S. Census Bureau, ACS 2016). However, Black or African American residents experience dramatically higher rates of poverty than most other racial and ethnic groups. In the city generally, 21.34% of Black residents are living in poverty, compared to 3.1% of White residents, 2.56% of Asian residents, 5.11% of Hispanic or Latino residents, and 100% of the 87 Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander residents of Eden Prairie. Within specific census tracts—geographic subdivisions within the city populated by between 1,800 and 8,000

people—minority populations experience much higher rates of poverty than the highest rates for White residents (US Census Bureau, ACS 2016).

Figure 3: Families with children under 18, income below federal poverty line. Social Explorer map accessed 9 October 2018, based on data from the American Community Survey (2016).



As it is in many other communities, poverty in Eden Prairie is higher in certain neighborhoods than others and is experienced at vastly higher rates among residents of color. The rate of poverty for all families with children younger than 18 varies from 0 to 9.4% between Eden Prairie census tracts. For Black or African American residents, however, it is as high as 46.8% in one tract and surpasses 30% in two others. For Asian residents, the poverty rate is between 20 and 21 percent in two tracts and fairly low in others, and for Hispanic residents the highest percentages are 30.5% and 29.17%, with much lower rates everywhere else in the city. All 87 residents of Eden Prairie identifying as Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander are living in poverty, according to 2016 American Community Survey estimates. For residents who are White alone, the poverty rate does not rise above 8% anywhere in Eden Prairie (figures 4-7).

Figure 4: Black or African American alone population, income below federal poverty threshold. Social Explorer map accessed 9 October 2018, based on data from the American Community Survey (2016).

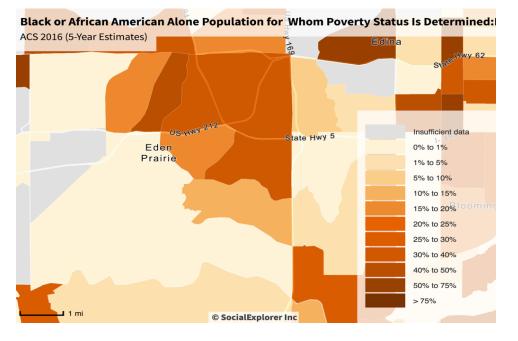


Figure 5: Hispanic or Latino alone, income below federal poverty threshold. Social Explorer map accessed 9 October 2018, based on data from the American Community Survey (2016).

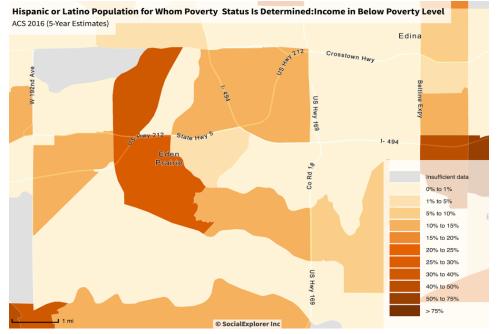


Figure 6: Asian alone, income below federal poverty threshold. Social Explorer map accessed 9 October 2018, based on data from the American Community Survey (2016).

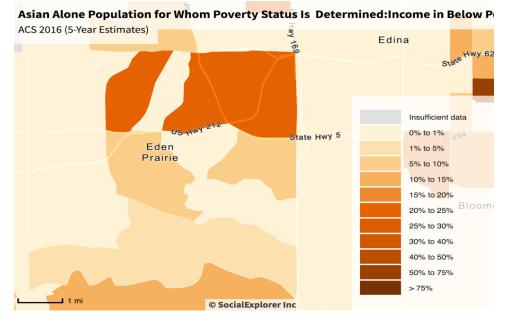
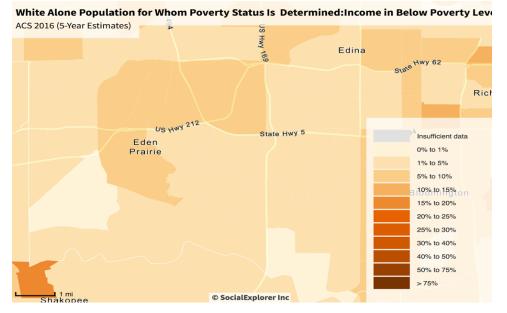


Figure 7: White alone population, income below federal poverty threshold. Social Explorer map accessed 9 October 2018, based on data from the American Community Survey (2016).

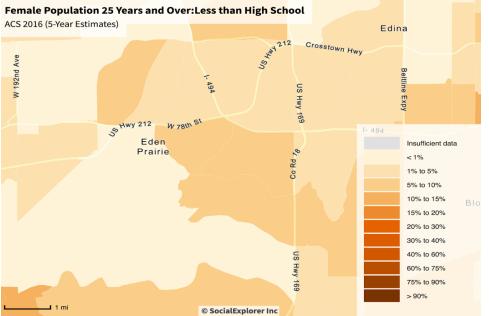


Black and African American residents especially, then, along with Hispanic or Latino residents, experience higher rates of poverty in Eden Prairie than those who are White alone. Also, while total rates of poverty among Asian residents are lower than those of White residents, in certain areas the poverty among these residents is more than twice that of the highest rates of poverty among White residents. Finally, residents experiencing poverty are much more likely to live in specific areas of the city: in many areas where one racial or ethnic group experiences higher rates of poverty, others are likely to experience higher rates as well.

Statistics related to education and levels of English fluency

When asked about the person in their families most involved in their children's education, 88% of question respondents reported that the mother was the most involved family member or was as involved as the father (figure 20, p. 34) Additionally, in all outreach classes visited, the attending parent was a mother. In order to look at potential need for parents' education in Eden Prairie, then, demographics of women with less than a high school education were examined. In Eden Prairie, 2.6% of the female population 25 years and older has less than a high school education. What's more, this segment of the population is concentrated in a few census tracts. In these areas, around 8% of women over 25 years old have no high school diploma or equivalent certificate.

Figure 8: Women over 25 years old with less than a high school education. Social Explorer map accessed 9 October 2018, based on data from the American Community Survey (2016).



Areas where women have the lowest rates of education overlap somewhat with areas of greater poverty for racial and ethnic minority groups; however, areas where women have higher education correlate more strongly with the areas of Eden Prairie that have low rates of poverty.

Foreign-born residents

Finally, because of the English language learning aspect of family literacy, data about foreign-born residents of Eden Prairie was analyzed. As one interview respondent noted, newly-arrived families from other countries may also have the highest needs for EL instruction because of a relative lack of exposure to English. Nearly 15% of the total population of Eden Prairie is foreign-born; about one-third of that percentage is made up of immigrants and refugees who have arrived in Eden Prairie since 2010 (U.S. Census Bureau, ACS 2017 estimates). Additionally, many of the census tract areas in which recent foreign-born residents live also have relatively high percentages of residents experiencing poverty and lower rates of high school education (see figures 3, 8, 9-10).

Residents who speak a language other than English, moreover, make up a higher percentage of the population than do foreign-born residents. Based on 2016 American Community Survey estimates, 10,720 residents of Eden Prairie, or 17.7% of the population, speak a language other than English. Of

these, an estimated 2,812 speak English less than "very well"—this group makes up 5.1% of the population.

Figure 9: Foreign-born population. Social Explorer map accessed 9 October 2018, based on data from the American Community Survey (2016).

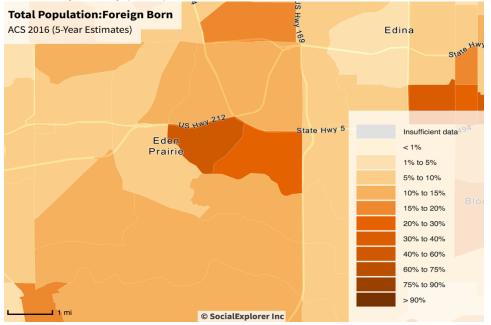
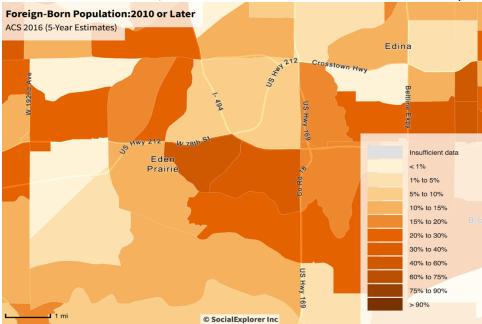


Figure 10: Percentage of Eden Prairie's foreign-born population who have arrived since 2010. Social Explorer map accessed 9 October 2018, based on data from the American Community Survey (2016).



Key findings from demographic data

Looking at demographic data provides a few statistics which suggest potentially greater needs for accessible English language support in a few communities while also highlighting the complexity of need factors. First, about 15% of Eden Prairie residents are foreign-born, and about 4% of all residents

have arrived in the United States within the past ten years. Eden Prairie has also been diversifying in other ways: populations of Black or African American, Hispanic or Latino, and Asian residents have all been growing over the past ten years. As our community continues to diversify, providing accessible supports to new families may become an even greater need. Because both Black or African American and Hispanic or Latino residents are more likely to experience poverty than most other residents, newly-arrived families in these groups may also have the greatest needs for accessible English language instruction.

However, these observations are not conclusive: data alone cannot give a complete or concrete portrait of a single population with the greatest need for accessible programming. The three examined factors of low education for women, poverty for families and by race/ethnicity, and percentages of foreign-born residents do not always overlap, and links between these factors are not straightforward. Even within census tract areas, percentages of the population experiencing each or multiple of these factors vary.

Survey results

While demographic data gives an overview of potential need for outreach programming, then, survey, interview, and discussion group data give a closer view of needs and resources for some of the individuals and communities Eden Prairie Schools serves.

Overview and interest in English instruction

Survey respondents were primarily parents of small children connected with Eden Prairie Schools' Lower Campus Preschool or ECFE programs. About half of all respondents were parents of Little Eagles preschool students, 22% were participants in ECFE outreach classes or Family Learning Nights, and 24% were residents of the Prairie Meadows apartment complex. The majority of respondents were parents of young children: 70% had a child between the ages of three and five, and nearly half had a younger or older child (Figure 21, p. 34). Respondents reported a wealth of language resources: English, Vietnamese, Spanish, Tagalog, Arabic, Russian, 4 different East African languages including Somali, and 6 different East Indian languages were reported as primary languages spoken at home.¹ Forty-five percent of respondents reported speaking English at home, 36% reported speaking Somali, 25% various East Indian languages, and 13% another language; 20% of respondents reported speaking two languages at home.

¹ For a complete list of languages reported, see Appendix C (p. 34).

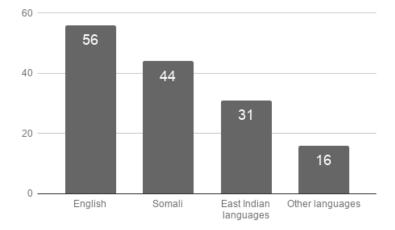


Figure 11: "What is the primary language spoken in your home?" Survey responses (N=123).

Interest in receiving English instruction was much higher among respondents who spoke Somali at home than any other language group: 75% of Somali respondents responded that English was important for them to learn, and 71% reported that they had considered taking English or GED classes. All eight respondents who reported that they were currently attending English or GED classes were Somali. Only four out of these eight attended class at Metro South's Eden Prairie location at Hennepin Technical College: two attended Metro South's outreach classes at the Briarhill apartment complex, where childcare is offered, and another two commuted to Hopkins to attend classes which also offer childcare.

Interest in learning English varied among other populations in Eden Prairie: only two, or 7%, of the 27 respondents who spoke East Indian languages had considered taking English or GED classes. Only 4 respondents reported speaking Spanish at home, but all of these individuals had considered taking English or GED classes, and one had completed a GED. Other language groups did not have enough representation among survey respondents to draw any conclusions about interest in English classes. Based on the data gathered, then, the majority of interest in English classes from parents of young children comes from Somali and possibly from Hispanic or Latino residents, pending further research.

Moreover, residents surveyed are not receiving services proportionally to their interest or their need. While only 9% of all survey respondents were enrolled in English or GED classes at the time of the survey, 39% had considered taking classes, and an even greater percentage—64%—reported speaking English at a level less than that of a native speaker. Thirty-eight individuals, or 31% of survey respondents, had considered taking English or GED classes and were not enrolled. Of these individuals, 40% reported speaking English at a level of two on a scale of zero to four, and 26% at a level of three.

English level	n (N=38)	%
0	4	10.5%
1	5	13.2%
2	15	39.5%
3	10	26.3%
4	3	7.9%

Figure 12: Self-reported English levels of survey respondents who had considered taking English classes and were not currently attending. (0 = not at all, 4 = native speaker)

What is most important for you and your children to learn?

Two open-ended questions at the end of the survey asked what respondents thought was most important for themselves and their children to learn. Answers to these questions revealed significant differences in expectations for learning between groups of parents who spoke different languages.

When answers to these questions were disaggregated by primary language spoken at home, Somalispeaking respondents were far more likely to note academic skills—either English or math—both for themselves and their children, and respondents speaking East Indian languages at home were far more likely to note parenting and social-emotional skills as important to learn. Respondents who listed English as a primary language of their household valued academic and social-emotional learning in slightly more even ratios, especially for their children.

Figure 13: "What is important for you to learn?"; "What is important for your children to learn?" Survey responses by primary language spoken at home. Parents' learning by primary language spoken Children's learning by primary language spoken

Parents' learning by prima at hom		e spoken	Children's learning by primary language spoken at home			
Somali:	n (N=37) %		Somali:	n (N=34)	%	
English or literacy skills	28	75.7%	English or literacy skills	22	64.7%	
Parenting	6	16.2%	Social-emotional skills	3	8.8%	
Personal	4	10.8%	Math or science	15	44.1%	
Job readiness	3	8.1%	School more generally	12	35.3%	
East Indian languages:	n (N=20)	%	East Indian languages:	n (N=24)	%	
English or literacy skills	5	25.0%	English or literacy skills	7	29.2%	
Parenting	12	60.0%	Social-emotional skills	17	70.8%	
Personal	3	15.0%	Math or science	2	8.3%	
Job readiness	1	5.0%	School more generally	1	4.2%	
English:	n (N=36)	%	English:	n (N=44)	%	
English or literacy skills	8	22.2%	English or literacy skills	19	43.2%	
Parenting	19	52.8%	Social-emotional skills	27	61.4%	
Personal	10	27.8%	Math or science	14	31.8%	
Job readiness	1	2.8%	School more generally	3	6.8%	

Responses to the question about what is important for parents to learn also suggest that at least among parents surveyed, learning English is more important than learning about job readiness. Among Somali respondents, 28 individuals (76%) wrote that learning English was important, while only three individuals (8%) mentioned job readiness goals like preparing for the GED or building career skills when asked about what was important for them to learn.

Best days and times for programming

When asked about best days and times for programming, the most-marked combinations were overwhelmingly weekday mornings. Friday mornings were marked less frequently than any other weekday mornings, and out of the 78 question respondents, no afternoon was reported as a good time to take classes by more than seven people.

Figure 14: "What days work best for you to take classes?"; "What times of day work best for you to take classes?" Survey responses (N=82).

	Morning	Afternoon	Evening
Monday	34	7	9
Tuesday	32	7	11
Wednesday	36	6	10
Thursday	31	4	8
Friday	24	5	9
Weekends	9	6	21

Limitations of the survey

Data that did not appear in the assessment also has implications for the way the existing data is interpreted. Three groups of residents were notably underrepresented in survey responses: Hispanic and Latino families, those who are not connected with Eden Prairie Schools' Early Childhood programs, and individuals who lack the literacy skills to complete a written survey. Out of those who are not connected to the school district, only Prairie Meadows residents had the opportunity to answer the survey, and only because of connections school staff had already built with Somali individuals who had relationships with Prairie Meadows residents. The third group, those lacking the basic literacy skills required to complete a survey, overlaps somewhat with the second, as only Prairie Meadows respondents had the opportunity to respond orally rather than through a written survey.

Though Hispanic and Latino residents make up 4.5% of Eden Prairie's population and 7% of students at Little Eagles preschool, only four out of the 123 survey respondents reported speaking Spanish at home. Hispanic or Latino families enrolled in Little Eagles preschool have slightly higher rates of not speaking English at home and having no high school diploma or GED than other racial or ethnic groups—though Black or African American families enrolled in preschool are most likely to experience one out of the three factors of speaking no English at home, having no high school diploma or GED, and qualifying for free or reduced lunch across current preschool contracts (figure 15).

Figure 15: Language, education, and income factors from preschool contracts by race/ethnicity. Source: Parents' self-reported registration information, Eleyo program management software, accessed 21 November 2018.

	-	reschool tracts		ily speaks no lish at home		/guardian has oloma or GED		y qualifies for educed lunch
	n (N=583)	% of all contracts	n	% within racial/ethnic group	n	% within racial/ethnic group	n	% within racial/ethnic group
Black or African American	119	20%	9	8%	14	12%	21	18%
Hispanic, Latino, or Latina	40	7%	4	10%	5	13%	2	5%
Asian	175	30%	16	9%	0	0%	1	1%
American Indian or Alaskan Native	10	2%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
White alone	209	36%	0	0%	1	0%	1	0%
Two+ races	41	7%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%

While both Black or African American and Hispanic or Latino families are overrepresented in Little Eagles preschool compared to city demographics, outreach classes disproportionately serve Somali and East Indian families, especially compared to Hispanic or Latino families. Despite the number of these families in the district and in potential need of outreach classes, no survey respondent at an outreach class identified her primary language spoken at home as Spanish, and no Spanish-speaking families attended any outreach class observed during the assessment.

Anecdotal reports from school staff and staff of other community organizations mentioned these families pulling out of school programming and services because of recent activity by Immigrations and Customs Enforcement agents in Eden Prairie and because of the current political atmosphere, though the subject did not come up in most interviews. Further research into barriers to attendance for Hispanic or Latino families may reveal other possible reasons for a lack of attendance and lead to new possibilities for engaging these families.

Another group that is not well-represented in survey data is parents who are not already connected with the school system. 72% of all surveys were collected through events hosted by Eden Prairie Schools, and some residents at Prairie Meadows also had children in Little Eagles preschool. Prairie Meadows respondents made up nearly half of all respondents who reported speaking English at levels of zero or one out of four; other families not already connected with Eden Prairie Schools programs and not represented in survey data may also have needs for basic English instruction (see pp. 20-21).

Survey data, then, shows a high interest in taking English classes among Somali mothers of young children as well as suggesting that other needs may exist for Hispanic and Latino families, those not already involved with Early Childhood programs, and those who lack both English language and basic literacy skills. Other data from the survey can be found under Appendix C (pp. 34-5).

Community resources, needs, and barriers related to family literacy

Throughout the assessment process, two main categories of resources and needs related to family literacy became evident. First, both community organizations and Eden Prairie residents expressed strengths and needs that can be termed social or relational. These were emotional, communication-related, and cultural, and applied both to program structure and to individuals' access to programs. Second, both community organization representatives and residents reported on logistical strengths and needs connected to various program components.

Social and relational resources and needs

While the survey focused mainly on logistical access to resources and barriers to participation, interviews and discussion groups also brought social and relational needs and resources to light. The following sections, then, summarize information from interviews and discussion groups which is not as easily quantified as more visible resources and needs, but was just as thoroughly ingrained in discussions about accessibility and program design.

Relationships

Relationships between individuals, groups, and organizations as either a strength, an opportunity for growth, or an outreach best practice were mentioned in 68% of community organization interviews and were especially recommended in serving Somali residents. More community organization representatives mentioned relationships than any other topic (Figure 24, p. 35).

One interviewee noted that the Eden Prairie Somali community was "like a family," and another commented on the connectedness of that community generally, noting relationships as an asset in finding transportation and other resources to make accessing programming possible.

Relationships between different cultural communities were also mentioned as an opportunity for growth by three different respondents. Building relationships between Somalis and those outside the Somali community was voiced as an opportunity for growth by two respondents. A community partner also mentioned awareness of diversity and cross-cultural skills as areas of growth for White residents, noting that cultural exchange or community events through a family literacy program may be able to impact both of these areas.

Seven out of the nine community organization interviewees asked about effective outreach and recruitment strategies mentioned building relationships as a best practice. All Somali interviewees noted specific individuals who had built relationships within the Somali community as the best way to reach Somali families. Through the process of doing outreach and research for this assessment, also, those methods that built on relationships and existing personal connections had the highest success in connecting with families.

Reputation and trust

Related to relationships, the subject of reputation and trust was brought up in multiple interviews and conversations, especially in relation to the Somali community in Eden Prairie. Multiple respondents mentioned the redrawing of school boundaries in 2010 as a source of tension between Somalis in Eden Prairie and the public school district, noting that this dispute had soured the school's reputation with the Somali community and created tension in the relationship between the two entities. That this issue

was brought up multiple times by multiple individuals eight years after boundaries were redrawn suggests that it may still impact the relationship between the school and Somali families.

Frustration with acceptance policies for both preschool and English classes also supports this suggestion of tension. In group discussions, residents expressed frustration both with long waiting lists for preschool and referral out of English classes in Eden Prairie. Confusion about the reasons for being denied these services was mentioned by several respondents and supported by observations from the district's Somali cultural and communications liaisons.

Multiple respondents with ties to the Somali community also mentioned the need for time to build trust. All White interviewees who had successfully developed services for and relationships with primarily Somali populations had worked in these communities for over 10 years. Together, these observations suggest that trust of the organization or individuals providing the programming is an important factor in program accessibility among Somali families. Combined with prior observations about the importance of relationship and the prevalence of pre- and non-literacy among Somali residents, then, these findings suggest that further research into non-print-based methods of communication which specifically aim to build reputation among and relationship with residents may be important for long-term program stability.

Mediation and cultural exchange

Multiple school administrators and family literacy program managers as well as participants in the Shakopee PACE family literacy program reported learning about American culture as a key component of family literacy programs. Navigating unfamiliar school systems, different cultural expectations for small children, and different expectations of parents and educators were all mentioned as learning opportunities within a family literacy program.

Some resources to support this cultural learning and navigation between different cultures are already available within the Somali community in Eden Prairie through existing services in mediation between families and community organizations. Two respondents mentioned providing mediation through their organizations; both of these respondents also also mentioned the school's communication liaisons as a valuable resource provided by Eden Prairie Schools.

Mediation happens between apartment complexes and city agencies as well as between parents and schools in Eden Prairie. One respondent described how her listening process had changed in the past few years: while she had started by bringing parents' concerns to school staff, she now listens to both school staff and parents' concerns and encourages conversation between the two groups. This two-way listening process, by her account, has had a positive effect on the relationship between Somali parents and their children's teachers by helping parents to navigate the culture of the American school system, voice their concerns, and better understand teachers' expectations and concerns.

This existing mediation framework, then, has the potential to serve as an important resource for program effectiveness, impacting barriers like cultural awareness, awareness of resources, and relationships between families and the school system.

Awareness of resources

Respondents representing community organizations mentioned awareness of resources as both a barrier and a strength.

Survey responses revealed an opportunity for greater awareness of resources in Eden Prairie: out of a list of six community organization resources available to families, only the public library had a use rate of over 45%. Connection with a "church, Mosjid, or other religious organization" was reported at a rate of 43%, and all other programs or organizations were used by less than a third of survey respondents (Figure 18). The library's programs for residents across socioeconomic levels may begin to explain this difference; however, the vast discrepancy between its use at 77% of all respondents and affiliation with a religious organization at 43% is notable.

Figure 16: "Which community organizations are you connected with? Check all that apply." Survey responses.

Resource	n (N=116)	%
Eden Prairie Library	89	76.7%
Church, Mosjid, or other religious organization	50	43.1%
City Parks and Recreation Programming	43	37.1%
Eden Prairie Schools Family Resources	15	12.9%
City Housing and Community Services	10	8.6%
PROP or the PROP Shop	7	6.0%

Interviews with community service providers also suggested a need for awareness of adult literacy resources in Eden Prairie: two representatives of churches stated that they had no knowledge of adult English or GED classes in Eden Prairie. One of those church staff members, moreover, reported that her congregation was not aware more generally of needs for immigrants and refugees in the city. Despite high rates of use for the library, library representatives reported that many residents were not aware of the range of resources the library provides, including resources for EL support and world language literacy.

Only one interview respondent mentioned a differing point of view from other organizations' reports that residents did not know about their programs. This respondent remarked that finding out where people went and using those insights to secure programming spaces had increased awareness and attendance at her programming. She noted that the library's centrality to residents and its status as a neutral, well-known space are key assets of the program she coordinates. Similarly, a school staff member noted that finding people who are interested, more than just providing programming, has been an important component of creating sustainable outreach programming in the past. These responses suggest that in designing new programming, building on existing relationships, connections, and heavily-frequented spaces in Eden Prairie could be an important way to support program sustainability.

A note on English classes and communication

Among Somali survey respondents and interviewees, comments about tension between the Somali community and Metro South were brought up several times: in further conversations, confusion about

reasons why residents were being turned away from classes was mentioned as a contributing factor to this tension.

One community organization representative noted that Somali clients he serves mainly go to Hopkins for English classes, and that he had heard about tension between the Metro South program at Hennepin Technical College and Somali residents. This observation was supported by conversations with residents of the Prairie Meadows apartments. Of the 29 respondents living in the apartments, two reported going to Hopkins for classes because childcare is offered there, and only one reported going to classes at Hennepin Technical College. An additional two respondents mentioned that they had been referred out of Metro South's Eden Prairie classes by program staff, were not currently attending English classes, and would like to continue learning English. Further conversations with residents and community organization respondents brought up concerns about confusion regarding reasons people were turned away from classes. Further research into reasons why residents leave or don't attend these classes may provide more information about barriers related to English classes in our community and ways to make programming more accessible.

Logistical resources and barriers

Out of 78 survey respondents who reported speaking English at a level less than a native speaker, 21 respondents reported not needing classes, and 8 reported being enrolled in classes. The remaining 49 individuals either neglected to answer the questions about considering or taking classes or reported a logistical barrier to participating as a reason for not taking classes. While a number of logistical factors were mentioned, childcare and transportation were reported as the highest of these barriers.

Both barriers were also mentioned by community members and representatives of community organizations, signaling that service providers are aware of the needs residents consider most pressing. However, residents emphasized childcare more than community organizations did, and those organizations emphasized transportation more than residents.

Existing resources for adult literacy

Within Eden Prairie, there are a number of resources available for adult literacy or English instruction. Metro South offers morning and evening English and GED classes at Hennepin Technical College, but does not offer childcare. The Eden Prairie Library offers resources for learning English and GED preparation in paper and online and publicizes opportunities for adult homework help and English classes in the greater Twin Cities area. The library also offers two-hour long conversation circles each Friday for adults learning English. During observation, these conversation circles were mostly attended by parents with school-aged children or those without children at home.

Among existing resources, a few gaps are notable. First, the Briarill collaboration between Metro South ABE and Eden Prairie Schools is the only resource for adult literacy in Eden Prairie which offers childcare. This class is also only available to Briarhill residents, which means that the large majority of residents of Eden Prairie have no access to English classes with childcare provided in their city. Second, only one program—Arrive Ministries' Somali Adult Literacy Training (SALT), a small, faith-based volunteer tutoring program—offered instruction to preliterate adults. No other in-person resources exist in Eden Prairie for adults who have not learned to read and write.

Additionally, a number of community organization representatives were not aware of existing resources for adult English classes in Eden Prairie, signaling a need for increased outreach to service providers about options for adult literacy. Survey responses also show that among respondents who spoke English at a less-than-native speaker level, only 37 had considered taking English classes, and even fewer were actually enrolled (Figures 25-26). While the classes at Hennepin Technical College and conversation circles at the library are both free and low-cost opportunities for English instruction, a lack of awareness about and participation in these opportunities points to a need for increased outreach about existing resources and design of more accessible programs for residents.

Need for adult basic literacy education

Another theme raised in several conversations, interviews, and observations conducted during the assessment was a potential need for adult basic literacy classes among Somali adults. Somali liaisons employed by the school district estimated that between 60% and 70% of Somali parents they work with cannot read or write; this represents a substantial number of Somali adults in Eden Prairie. Observations made during the assessment period also suggested a potential need for literacy instruction among Eden Prairie residents. In understanding the scope of the need more completely, however, more data is needed.

Out of all survey respondents, seven self-reported speaking no English at all, and an additional nine reported speaking English at a level of one on a scale of zero to four. However, three and four of these individuals respectively were residents of Prairie Meadows, suggesting a potentially higher need for lower levels of English instruction among these individuals. Additionally, self-reported levels of *speaking* English may not correlate with levels of reading and writing ability.

Several observations made during the assessment period also suggest that there may be numbers of preliterate parents in Eden Prairie and within Eden Prairie Schools' programs which were surprising to those conducting this assessment. At Eagles Study Sessions and Family Learning Nights, check-in was changed from a system where parents had to find their children's names in an alphabetized list to a color-coded card system which listed families together. While using the former system, many parents asked their children to check in for them, displayed discomfort throughout the check-in process, and were unable to write their initials without help. After changes were made, mostly eliminating the need for parents to read and write by having them circle their own names and put check marks by the names of their children, the process became much more smooth.

Adaptations were also made in the assessment process. Only three Somali-speakers completed the paper survey sent out to preschool parents; the rest were attendees of outreach classes or residents at Prairie Meadows. All surveys at Prairie Meadows were conducted orally and in person, making the survey accessible to individuals who might not have been comfortable reading and writing or able to read and write. Methods of surveying that were personal, oral, and allowed literate individuals to help by answering questions about the survey or writing down dictated answers had by far the greatest rates of success among Somali participants.

While none of these findings are conclusive, all of them suggest that a lack of understanding of written materials may be a barrier to understanding marketing and communications sent out by the school district for some Eden Prairie residents, and furthermore, that pre- or non-literacy may limit these residents' ability to access other programming and supports.

Childcare

Childcare was the most commonly-mentioned barrier to participation across all groups interviewed and surveyed. Community organization representatives did not mention childcare as frequently as transportation: 15% of interview respondents noted childcare as a need, compared to the 58% who mentioned transportation. Representatives of Metro South, however, mentioned childcare in nearly every interview. Childcare was also mentioned in the 2017 Needs and Resources Assessment as a high unmet need for residents. Finally, it was by far the most reported barrier to taking English or GED classes in group discussions and through the survey.

In focus groups conducted at two ECFE outreach sites, community members voiced childcare as their highest need. They reported it as a barrier to working, pursuing education, and learning English. Survey responses backed up these statements: of those who had considered taking English or GED classes but were not currently attending, 68% reported childcare as a reason (13% of the same group reported transportation as a reason). Among all survey participants who spoke English at a level less than that of a native speaker, including those who had never considered taking English classes, a slightly lower percentage noted childcare and transportation as barriers to attending English or GED classes.

Figure 17: "If you do not currently attend English or GED classes, why not? Check all that apply." Survey responses from respondents who had considered taking English or GED classes and were not currently attending.

	n (N=38)	%
Childcare	26	68.4%
Transportation	5	13.2%
Timing	3	7.9%
I don't need them	2	5.3%
Cost	1	2.6%

Figure 18: "If you do not currently attend English or GED classes, why not? Check all that apply." Survey responses from respondents who speak English at a level lower than "native speaker".

	n (N=64)	%
Childcare	37	57.8%
I don't need them	21	32.8%
Transportation	8	12.5%
Timing	4	6.3%
Cost	4	6.3%
Awareness	1	1.6%

Potential need for childcare among immigrant and refugee families in Minnesota has also been previously documented. A 2015 report by the Amherst H. Wilder Foundation on a study of over 400 immigrant and refugee families in the Twin Cities area reported that only 5% of respondents received childcare from a licensed family child care provider, while over 80% of children in these families attended public school (Wilder 3). This signals a potential need for increased outreach about preschool

and childcare programming as well as English classes to immigrant and refugee populations in the Twin Cities area.

Together, these findings suggest that providing childcare is the most important logistical component of making adult English or GED classes accessible to Eden Prairie families.

Transportation

Transportation has also been noted as a need in Eden Prairie by the 2017 Needs and Resources Assessment and was mentioned as a need in 58% of interviews with community organization representatives. Two of these representatives noted specifically that residents they serve don't use SouthWest Transit, and two others said that most people they serve use their own cars or find rides with people they know rather than using public or commercial transportation options.

Though community members mentioned transportation as a need, they were much less likely to list it as a high need than members of community organizations. Discussion group participants reported that families could most likely find rides, though they did confirm that it may be difficult for some families to find transportation due to many families having only one car. While mothers voiced childcare as a more pressing need, they still mentioned transportation as an important resource to secure.

Other family literacy programs reported transportation as a significant issue in program design. Chaska recently transitioned from providing bussing to having participants use SW Prime, and Lakeville's Family School recently transitioned from providing bussing all year to only providing it during winter months. The program manager in Lakeville noted budgeting \$27,000 yearly to secure bussing, and \$8,000-\$9,000 when only providing that service in the winter. In Shakopee, most families use chartered busses to attend programming; the program coordinator noted that logistical issues with the bus company take up a large portion of her time.

The combination of interviews with existing family literacy programs, survey responses, and conversations with Eden Prairie community organization representatives suggests that finding transportation for the family literacy program ought to be a secondary consideration to securing childcare. While transportation should be important to the program based on numerous interviews, survey and discussion group responses show that residents themselves are concerned about childcare more than they are about transportation.

Cost

Though few survey respondents mentioned cost as a barrier, demographics of current preschool families and places surveyed—Prairie Meadows is a project-based Section 8 subsidized housing complex—indicate that families who took the survey may also be experiencing poverty or financial hardship. This assessment was also undertaken with the assumption that the program would be free or offered at very low cost to families—in discussing the possibility of English classes with focus groups at current outreach classes, it was communicated that cost would not be a barrier, bypassing those discussions. Further research into families' abilities to pay for programming may offer additional insights into the role cost plays as a barrier to participation.

A note on residents' investment in education

Throughout the process of assessment, residents themselves continually contributed to bringing accessible English classes to Eden Prairie. One Eden Prairie Schools staff member reiterated multiple times that if adult literacy and English instruction were provided, residents would come—this statement is supported by the amount of work residents put into supporting the assessment and participating in classes and other learning opportunities available to them.

When the topic of adult education was brought up in discussion groups at ECFE outreach classes, community members responded that English was the most important subject for adults to learn. Furthermore, they invested in bringing that education to their communities by providing input and completing the survey. Despite varying levels of education, from limited reading and writing skills to Bachelors' degrees, participants were willing to fill out surveys. Surveying at Prairie Meadows was also made possible by the support of one of the parents attending the Preserve class, who volunteered to act as a cultural and relational broker between the school and Somali residents.

Group discussion responses and observation also revealed residents' determination to pursue education for themselves and their children. During the assessment period, a tutoring and parent engagement program collaborated on by Baro and City Hill tutoring groups and Eden Prairie Schools Community Education expanded to serve over 100 registered students—mostly from Somali families— in three months' time. Survey respondents at Prairie Meadows continually expressed enthusiasm about the possibility of accessible English classes in Eden Prairie, and several reported driving to Hopkins, where childcare is offered alongside adult English instruction, to attend classes.²

Despite barriers of childcare, transportation, and limited resources, then, residents of Eden Prairie are seeking out opportunities for educating themselves and their children. While securing resources to make English instruction accessible to these residents is manifestly important, observation suggests that they have and will continue to overcome these barriers in pursuing opportunities for growth and learning.

Conclusion

One interviewee remarked that Eden Prairie is a city with a many resources available to residents. Connecting the right people to the right resources, she noted, is one of the key issues currently confronting service providers. In the case of adult literacy and English instruction, these statements are both accurate and lacking. While many resources are available to residents who contributed to this assessment, both resources for adult literacy and English instruction and opportunities to access those resources fall short of residents' requests for them.

Eden Prairie Schools' family literacy program, then, is situated to fill a substantial gap in services within the city. Furthermore, this gap is one that has been noted not only by service providers, but by residents themselves: the support and input this assessment has received from community members demonstrates their investment in bringing accessible English instruction to their communities. Existing connections within the Eden Prairie Somali community provide a strong basis for building programming

² Multiple residents at Prairie Meadows as well as several discussion group participants also asked if classes would be available to people without children, noting that the need for English instruction extends beyond parents of young or K-12 children.

for these families; one area for growth is in building similar connections with Hispanic and Latino families in Eden Prairie. Continued research, evaluation, and conversation with residents will ensure that relational resources are being built upon and community needs met as we move forward in responding to residents' requests for adult literacy and English programming.

Finally, it is important to note that the upcoming program will not be able to meet all needs for adult literacy instruction: additional needs for pre-literacy and beginning English instruction for adults without young children were expressed by multiple residents. Further research into what kinds of English instruction are most needed by residents may lead to insights into additional best courses of action in responding to community needs.

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Appendix A: Questions asked

EPS staff

- What is your vision for a family literacy program? What are you hoping for in regards to it?
- What resources do our programs already draw on?
- What are the biggest needs and challenges for families already in these programs? For the programs themselves?
- What are the biggest assets for families in your programs? For the programs themselves?
- What might your staff be able to contribute to a family literacy program?

Outreach sites

- What is the history of the site?
- What demographics do you work with?
- What are particular assets at your site?
- What are particular challenges/barriers at your site?
- What do you think is the percentage of EL learners? Do you have an idea of the literacy rates?
- How much does attendance vary? What has been successful in getting attendance?
- What is the relationship with the site like?
- What have been successful outreach strategies?
- How would you recommend getting to know the community you're working with?
- What would you hope for in a family literacy program?

Family literacy programs General/Preliminary

- How did your program start?
- What is the scope of what you do?
- What have been the biggest challenges/barriers for you? The biggest successes?
- What demographics do you serve?
- Do you serve Eden Prairie residents?
- How have you gotten resources/funding?
- What resources have been important for your program?
- What kinds of partnerships have been helpful for you?
- How/how much are the different components of your program integrated with each other?
- How often do you have programming?
 - What has the history of that been?
- How do people get connected to your programs?
- Who else should I talk to?

Details

Staff and volunteers

- What are minimum/ideal scenarios for staffing? Ratios?
- Do you have a policies/procedures manual? What do those look like?
- What does training for your staff and volunteers look like?

Outreach, recruitment, and registration

- How do you do outreach?
- How do you recruit/screen/orient participants?
 - What are your eligibility requirements?
- What kinds of program incentives do you have for recruitment or retention?

- How do you register families?
- Do you register adults who want to take ELL without doing other program components?
- How is the community reception?

Access

- Are there material fees? How much do families pay generally?
- Do you provide transportation?
 - What transportation do families use to get to your programs?

Physical space and supplies

- Do you offer lunch or a snack?
- What technology do you use/would you recommend?
 - In the classroom
 - In registration

Programming and curriculum

- What curriculum do you use? How did you determine which one to use?
- Are there different levels of programming?
- What do your specific classes look like?
- Do you use guest speakers? Who have you had in, if so?
- Do you have a computer literacy component?
- Do you do home visits? When and why?
- How do you help people with immigration-related needs? What information about the citizenship test, if that's included?
- To what extent do you help families connect with community resources? What does that look like?
- What does completing the program look like? Time-wise? Course-wise? What does success look like for program participants?

Community organizations

- What programs/services do you provide, and what demographics do you primarily serve?
- What resources do the community members you serve have access to?
- What are needs for the community members who use your programs?
 - o relating to literacy specifically?
- What are barriers for the community members who use your programs? For you serving them?
- What partnerships with other organizations have been successful?
 - What spaces have you partnered with successfully?
- Have you had any connection in the past with ABE/ESL, tutoring, ECFE, or early literacy programs?
- Which of your services/programs are thriving? Are there any that haven't taken off?
- What times of day generally work best for the populations you serve?
- What has been successful in reaching out to the populations you serve? What strategies have fallen short?
- How have you gotten input from the people whom you serve?
- Would you be willing to hand out surveys, to host a facilitated discussion about family literacy with the people you serve, or to help advertise focus groups? Which of these methods might work best with the population you serve?
- Who else would you recommend that I talk with?

- What are content areas that people you serve might need more information about? What topics should be incorporated into a family lit curriculum?
- Do you know of any other resources for family literacy available in the community?

additional questions for churches

- How do you determine the populations that you serve?
- How do you reach out to the populations that you serve?
- In what ways do you serve families who might benefit from a family literacy program?
- What does your engagement with people of different faiths look like?
- If you have a preschool:
- How do your preschools overcome transportation and/or cost barriers?
- Do your preschools have any parent components?

Community members

Interview questions:

- 1. Who is involved with kids' education in your community?
- 2. What are strengths of your community in educating children?
- 3. What are needs in your community, especially for literacy and/or school readiness?
- 4. Where do people go for childcare?
- 5. Have you heard of family literacy programs? What do you know about them? If you kow about them, what keeps you from attending?
- 6. Do people in your community attend ELL or GED classes? If so, where?
- 7. Do people in your community use public transportation, and how or why not?
- 8. How comfortable are people in your community with using technology?
- 9. What would people in your community be able/willing to pay to participate? What would be too much to pay?
- 10. What is important for teachers to know about you and your community?

Group discussion questions:

- 1. What are the biggest adult education needs in your community?
- 2. Have you ever used SW Prime?
- 3. What times would work best for families to participate in family lit programs?
- 4. What is most important for children to learn?
- 5. What would you want your teachers to know about your community?

Appendix B: Family literacy survey (English copy)

Commun	IRIE SCHOOLS vity Education
-	racy Survey
Dear Parent,	
Thank you for considering taking this survey!	
for Family Literacy programming (which might include	ent wants to know more about your interest and need e adult ESL, preschool, and ECFE classes). If you choose to hat current families want and need so that we can better
Taking this survey is optional, and your answers will n	tot be connected to you: they will only be used in
	The survey should take about 15 minutes of your time.
Please return the survey to your child's classed	oom. Any questions about the survey should be directed
to Lydia Nelson, Family Literacy VISTA, at 952-975-69	
, , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , ,	,
1. In your family, who is most involved with your	4. What is the primary language spoken in your
children's education?	home?
Children's mother	English
Children's father	Spanish
Children's grandparent	Somali
Other:	Other:
2. How old are your children? (check all that	5. How well do you speak English?
apply)	5. How well do you speak English?
0-3 years old	0 1 2 3 4
3-5 years old	Not at all Native speake
G+ years old	
	Have you ever considered taking English or GED
Which organizations and resources in Eden	classes?
Prairie are you connected with? (check all that	Yes, English classes
apply)	Yes, GED classes
Eden Prairie Library	□ No
Eden Prairie Schools Family Resources	If yes, do you currently attend?
Program Church, <u>Mosjid</u> , or other religious	C Yes
organization	□ No
PROP and/or the PROP Shop	
City of Eden Prairie Housing and	8. If you do not currently attend English or GED
Community Services	classes, why not? (check all that apply)
City of Eden Prairie Parks and Recreation	Children was a stable to
Programming	Childcare was a problem
Other:	Transportation was a problem Cost was a problem
	They were at a bad time for me
	Other:

	Morning	
	Afternoon Evening	
	-	
10. W	hat days of the week work best for you to take classes? (check all that apply)	
	Monday Tuesday	
	Wednesday	
	Thursday	
	Friday	
	Weekends	
11. W	hat is important for your children to learn?	
	hat is important for you to learn?	
	Thank you for taking our survey!	
		meor
	Thank you for taking our survey!	meor
	Thank you for taking our survey! If you would like someone to call or email you about future family literacy programming, or if soil from Eden Prairie Schools can follow up with you about this survey, please list your contact information below. I would like to be called about future family literacy programming.	meor

Appendix C: Additional data

Figure 20: "In your family, who is most involved	vith your child's education?" Survey responses.
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answer	n (N=118)	
mother	53	44.9%
Mother and father	50	43.1%
grandparent	3	2.5%
father	14	11.9%

Figure 21: "How old are your children?" Survey responses.

age	n (N=119)	%
0-3	60	50.4%
3-5	85	71.4%
6+	50	42.0%

Figure 22: "What is the primary language spoken in your home?" Survey responses.

Language	n (N=123)	%	
English	53	45.5%	
Somali	43	35.8%	
Hindi	14	12.2%	
Telugu	9	7.3%	
Amharic	4	3.3%	
Spanish	4	3.3%	
Kannada	2	1.6%	
Gujurati	2	1.6%	
Tamil	2	1.6%	
Vietnamese	2	0.8%	
Arabic	1	0.8%	
Malayalam	1	0.8%	
Maay Maay	1	0.8%	
Oromo	1	0.8%	
Russian	1	0.8%	
Tagalog	1	0.8%	

Figure 23: "Do	you currently	vattend [Eng	plish or GFD	classes]?"	Survey re	sponses.
inguic 23. DO	you currenti	א מננכחים נבחק	BUSU OF OF D	ciusses]:	Juiveyie	sponses.

	n (N=89)	%
Yes	8	9.0%
No	81	91.0%

Figure 24: Needs, resources, and barriers mentioned in community organization interviews.

Topic mentioned as need, barrier, or resource	n (N=19)	%
relationships	13	68.4%
transportation	11	57.9%
diversity and multiculturalism	5	26.3%
awareness of resources	5	26.3%
space	5	26.3%
attendance	5	26.3%
English language learning	4	21.1%
cost	4	21.1%
childcare	3	15.8%
tutoring	3	15.8%
school readiness	3	15.8%
lack of resources	3	15.8%
literacy needs	2	10.5%
mediation	2	10.5%
digital literacy	2	10.5%
job readiness	2	10.5%
homelessness	2	10.5%
citizenship classes	1	5.3%

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