

MEMORANDUM



Bellevue Parks &
Community Services

DATE: January 6, 2025

TO: Human Services Commission

FROM: Asma Ahmed, Human Services Planner
Parks & Community Services

SUBJECT: Panel Conversation: Childcare Service Trends and Provider Challenges

Background

Access to quality childcare is essential for fostering economic stability, supporting workforce participation, and ensuring healthy child development. However, many families in Bellevue face significant barriers to securing affordable and culturally appropriate childcare. The City of Bellevue's [2023-2024 Human Services Needs Update](#) highlights the growing demand for child care services, driven by shifting demographics and rising costs of living. Nearly 50% of Bellevue residents speak a language other than English at home, and 15.6% have limited English proficiency, underscoring the need for childcare providers who reflect the linguistic and cultural diversity of the community.

Survey data from the needs assessment indicates that 38% of respondents who sought affordable childcare reported difficulty finding it within the community. Focus groups revealed that many parents, particularly those from immigrant and low-income backgrounds, rely on informal networks or leave the workforce due to a lack of suitable childcare options. Additionally, providers expressed a desire to expand affordable childcare services, but cited funding limitations, staffing shortages, and lack of physical space as the primary barriers. Efforts to address childcare needs in Bellevue include collaborations with culturally specific organizations and initiatives to expand early learning programs. However, it's clear that there is a need for increased investment in the childcare infrastructure, equitable distribution of resources, and deeper community engagement to ensure that all families, regardless of income or background, have access to the childcare services they need.

Human Services staff have assembled a panel of subject matter experts from nonprofits providing childcare services.

Representatives from the following agencies will be joining the panel:

- **Janine Meyers**, Early Learning Services Director and **Stacy Morrison**, with [BrightSpark](#)
- **Enrica Hampton**, Director of Early Learning Programs at [Kinderling](#)
- **Kristi Murphy**, Director of Grants Services at [Boys and Girls Clubs of Bellevue](#)

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Panel members will be asked round-robin style to answer the following questions:

1. Could you start by introducing yourself and sharing a brief overview of your agency? Please highlight the specific childcare services you provide and the communities you serve.
2. From your perspective, what are some of the biggest misconceptions or overlooked realities about childcare access and availability in Bellevue?
3. What do you see as the most pressing childcare needs in Bellevue, and what barriers stand in the way for families and providers alike?
4. What are the most significant challenges your agency faces in expanding or sustaining childcare services, and how can the Commission better support your work?

Commissioners will be invited to ask questions after the panel has completed answering all questions.