



Presentation to the Council for Thriving Children

*Findings from the 2022 Preschool
Development Grant Needs Assessment*

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Project Partners

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What activities did the Carsey School undertake for the 2022 needs assessment?



What have we learned about child and family needs from this assessment?



What opportunities exist to strengthen New Hampshire's child- and family-serving systems?

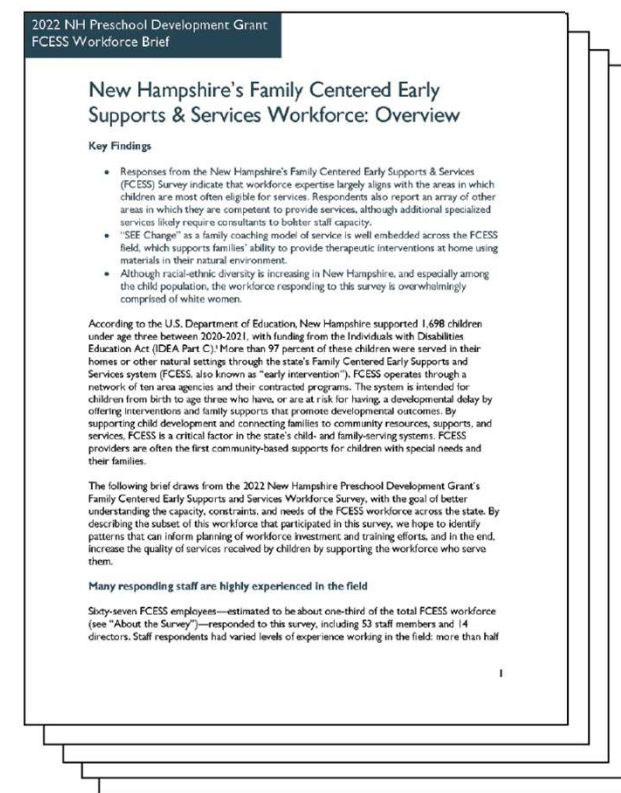
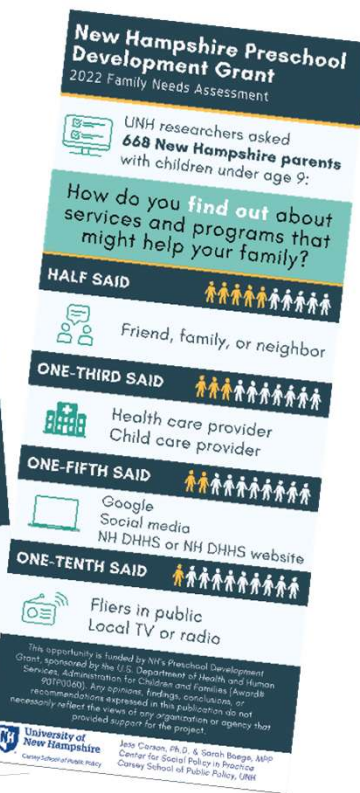
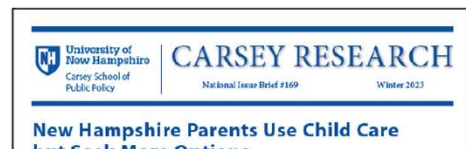
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Family & Child Needs

- Survey based on earlier NAs and partner feedback
- Disseminated via UNH Survey Center and PIC (500+ partner organizations!)
- Final survey included 668 NH parents
- Results in two research briefs and two infographics

Workforce Strengths & Needs

- Two surveys: “early intervention” staff & community mental health center children’s program staff
- Disseminated through DHHS
- Results in five white papers



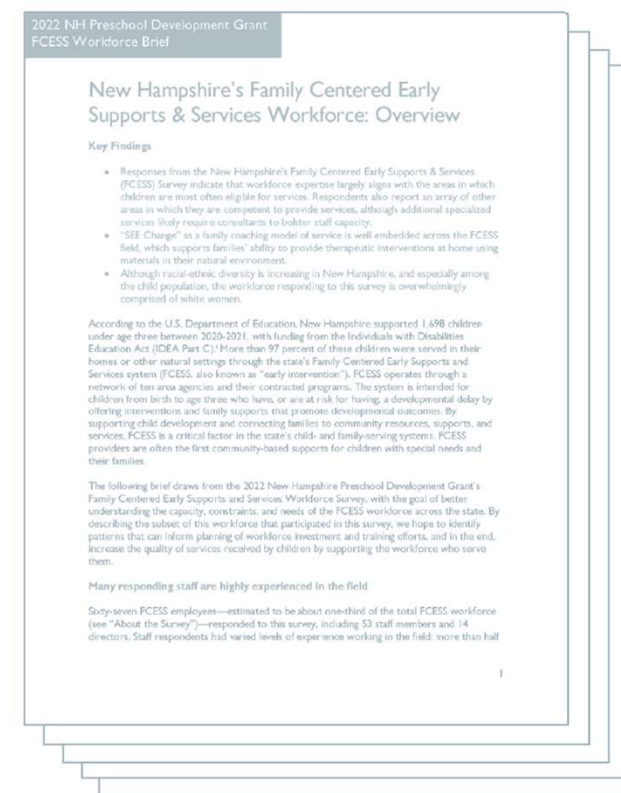
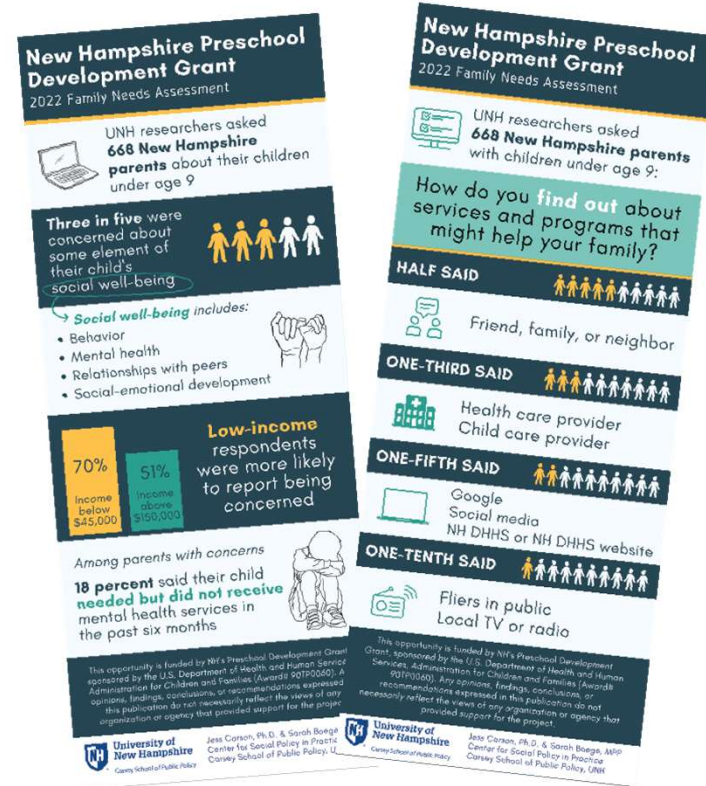
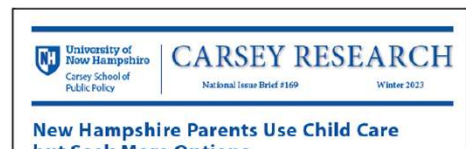
All results available via <https://carsey.unh.edu/center-for-social-policy-in-practice/new-hampshire-preschool-development-grant-project>

Family & Child Needs

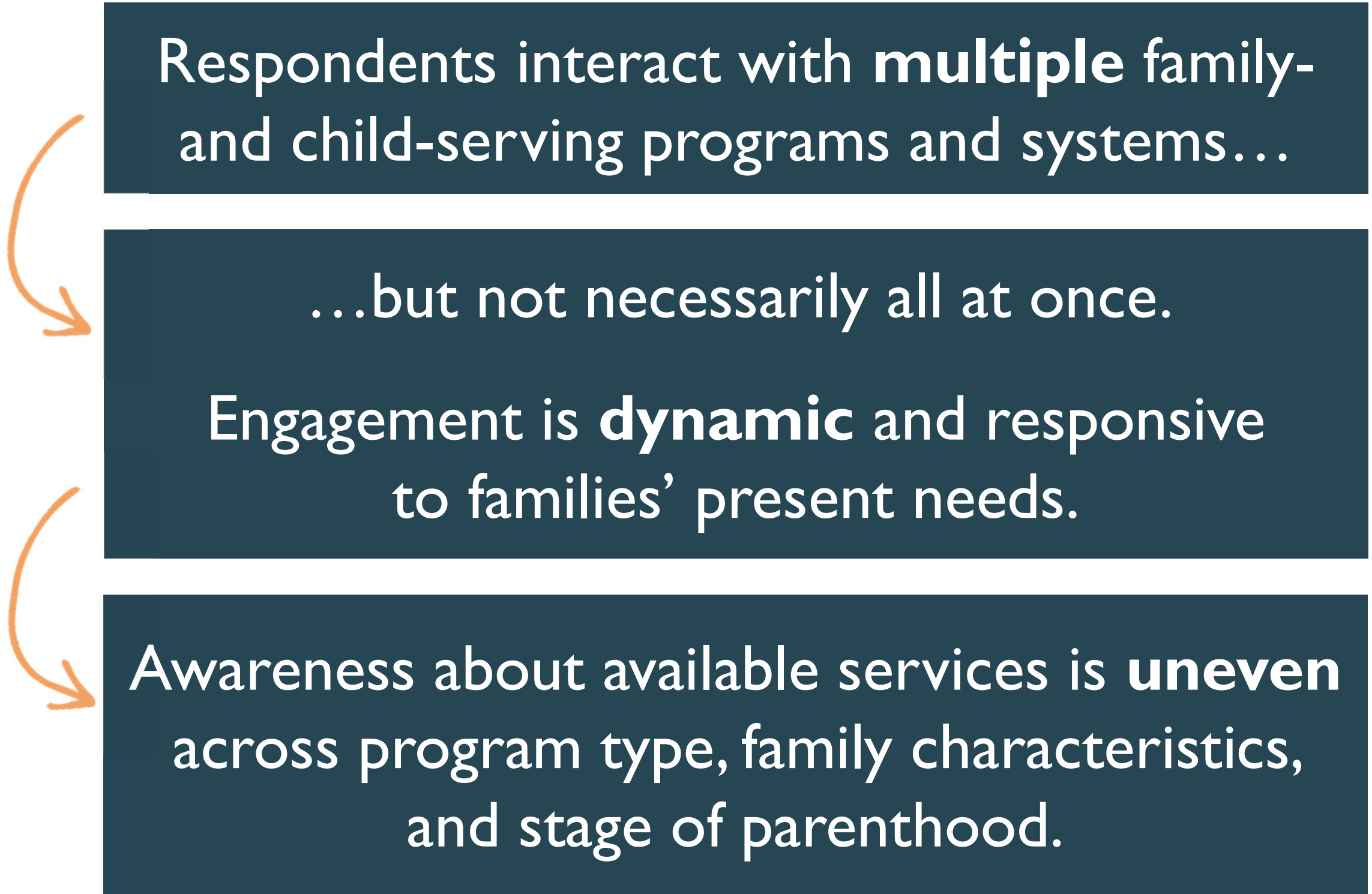
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What have we learned about child and family needs from this assessment?




Respondents interact with **multiple** family- and child-serving programs and systems...

...but not necessarily all at once.

Engagement is **dynamic** and responsive to families' present needs.

Awareness about available services is **uneven** across program type, family characteristics, and stage of parenthood.

Most NH families with young kids use at least some child care

- Three-quarters of respondents with children under age 5 used **child care** (similar to 69 percent among all NH households with kids under 5, via U.S. Census Bureau)
- 73 percent of our sample had searched for care in the past year
- Half of searchers reported that the search difficult.
- The top challenge? 

“Getting a spot is like playing Bingo.
[There are] too few spots available
compared to how many children
need the care.”

New Hampshire parent

Via 2022 NH PDG Family Needs Assessment Survey

Change in NH Licensed Child Care Supply, 2017 to 2021

	<u>Percent Change</u>
Number of providers	↓ 8.4
Total licensed capacity	↑ 6.8

Source: Carsey School of Public Policy analysis of data from New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services Child Care Licensing Unit; 2017 and 2021.
Note: Calculated among providers serving at least some children under age 5.

Change in NH Licensed Child Care Supply, 2017 to 2021

	<u>Percent Change</u>
Number of providers	↓ 8.4
Total licensed capacity	↑ 6.8
Center-based provider capacity	↑ 8.3
Home-based provider capacity	↓ 22.1

Source: Carsey School of Public Policy analysis of data from New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services Child Care Licensing Unit; 2017 and 2021.
Note: Calculated among providers serving at least some children under age 5.

Suggestive evidence that even families using care may need something more or different from their arrangement.


Among respondents to the NH PDG survey

When asked how well their child care arrangement worked, only one-fifth said it was ideal.

Among parents statewide

Two-thirds of NH households using care use a child care center. But just half of those use *only* a center.

We asked NH parents what would improve their child care arrangement...

- 149 of the 249 respondents chose “if it were **more affordable.**”
- However, 10-15 percent of respondents picked other options too, touching on location, teacher quality, and more.
- The most common write-in? 

Child care that fits their work schedule.

Nothing opens early enough

Longer hours. Facility closes at 4:30 which does not accommodate a typical 9-5 job.

If school operated on a schedule that matched most working parents

Open slightly later in the day

Was open earlier

She's in part time kindergarten. It should be full time.

Offered aftercare

Open later in the afternoon

Open later than 2pm

Better hours for working parents

Preschool hours to begin earlier and end later, thus providing more hours for me to work.

Would like early morning care

Longer day to accommodate parents' work schedule

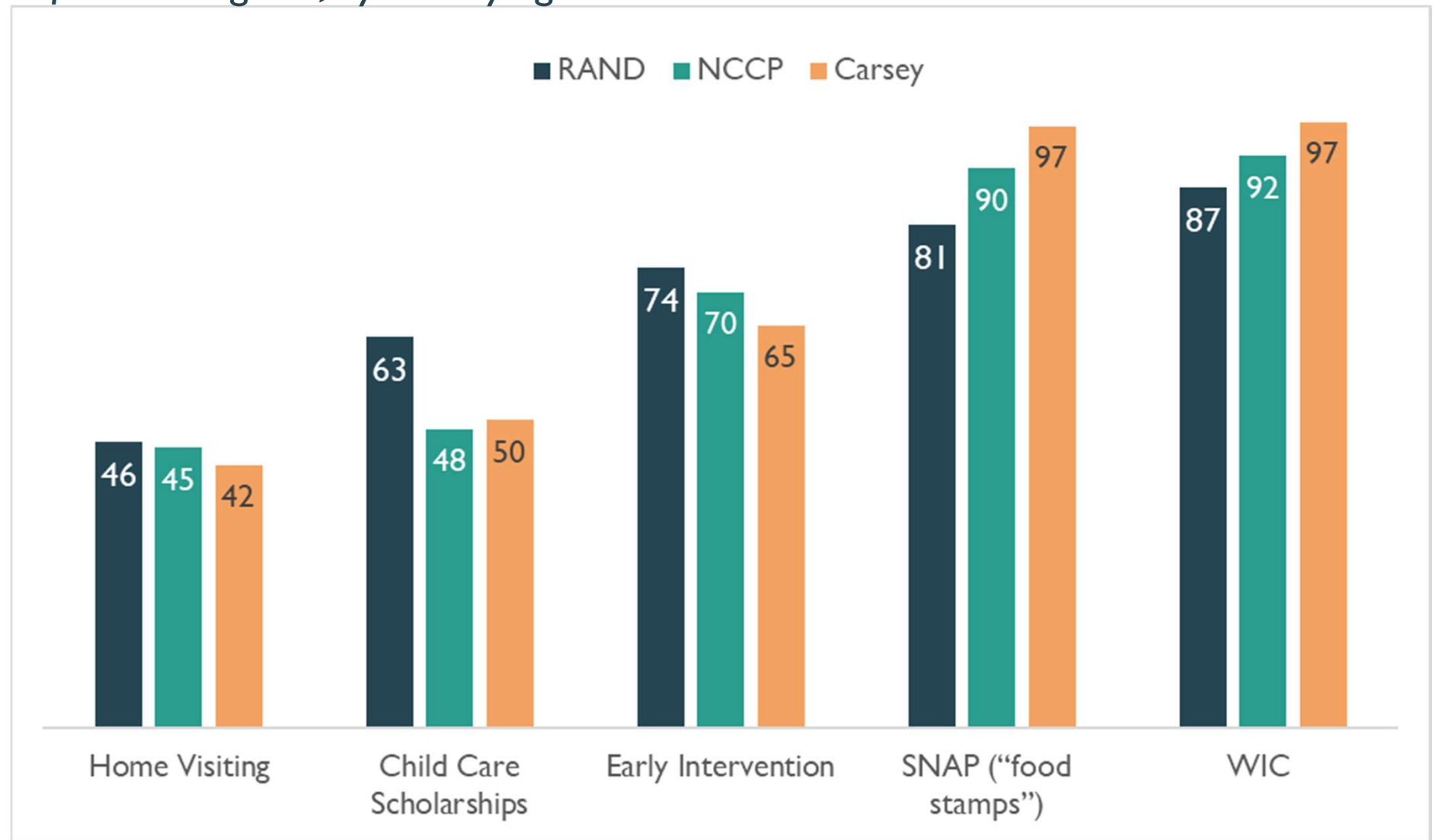
Source: Direct quotes from Carsey School of Public Policy analysis of the New Hampshire Preschool Development Grant's 2022 Family Needs Assessment Survey
Note: Turquoise font is a quote re: arrangements for a child under age 5; orange font is a quote re: arrangements for a school-age child.

Short- and long-term supports have a role

- When asked about programs other than child care, families had mixed engagement.
- Most commonly, they reported **previously** using short-term supports like food stamps...
- And ongoing engagement with programs like the National School Lunch Program & Special Ed

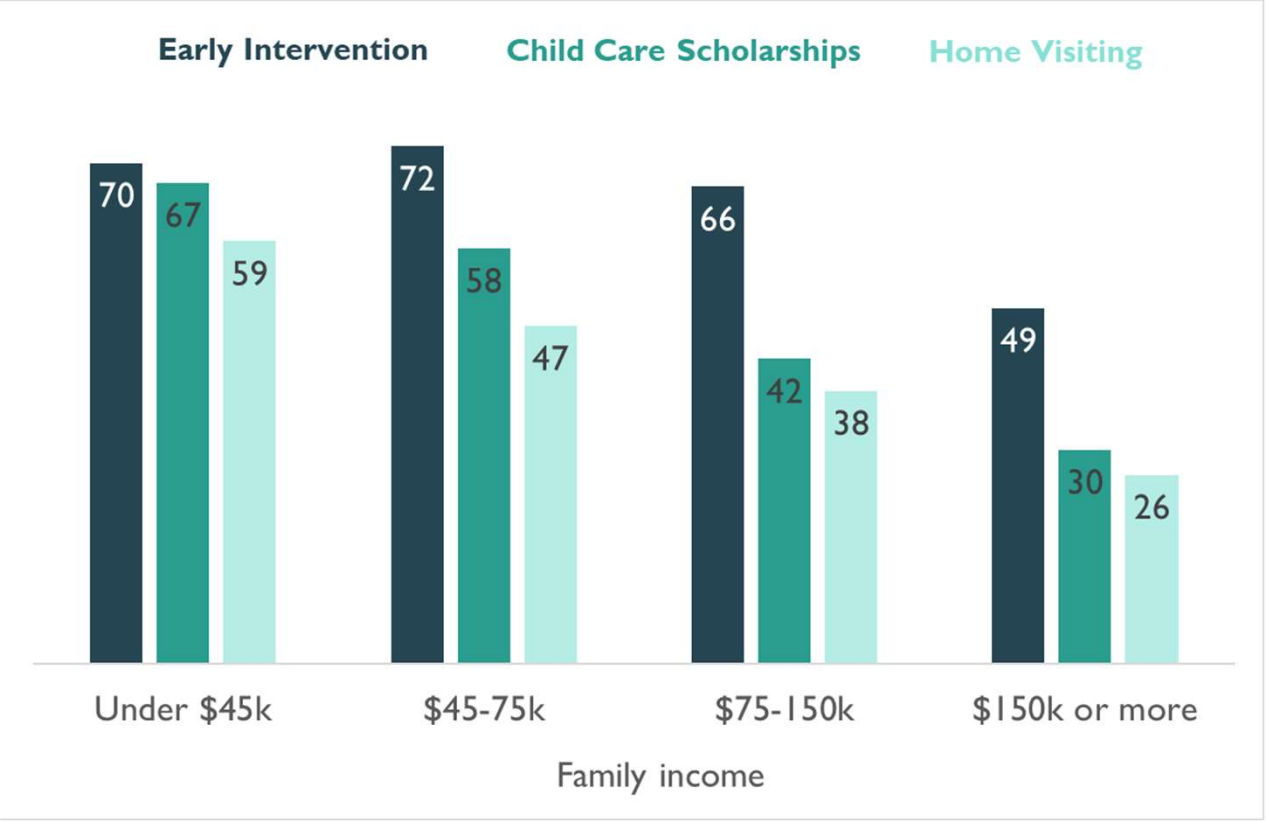
Familiarity with programs varies—a finding that has been stable across three NH PDG samples

Percent of NH PDG Family Needs Assessment Respondents Who Have Heard of Each Program, by Surveying Institution



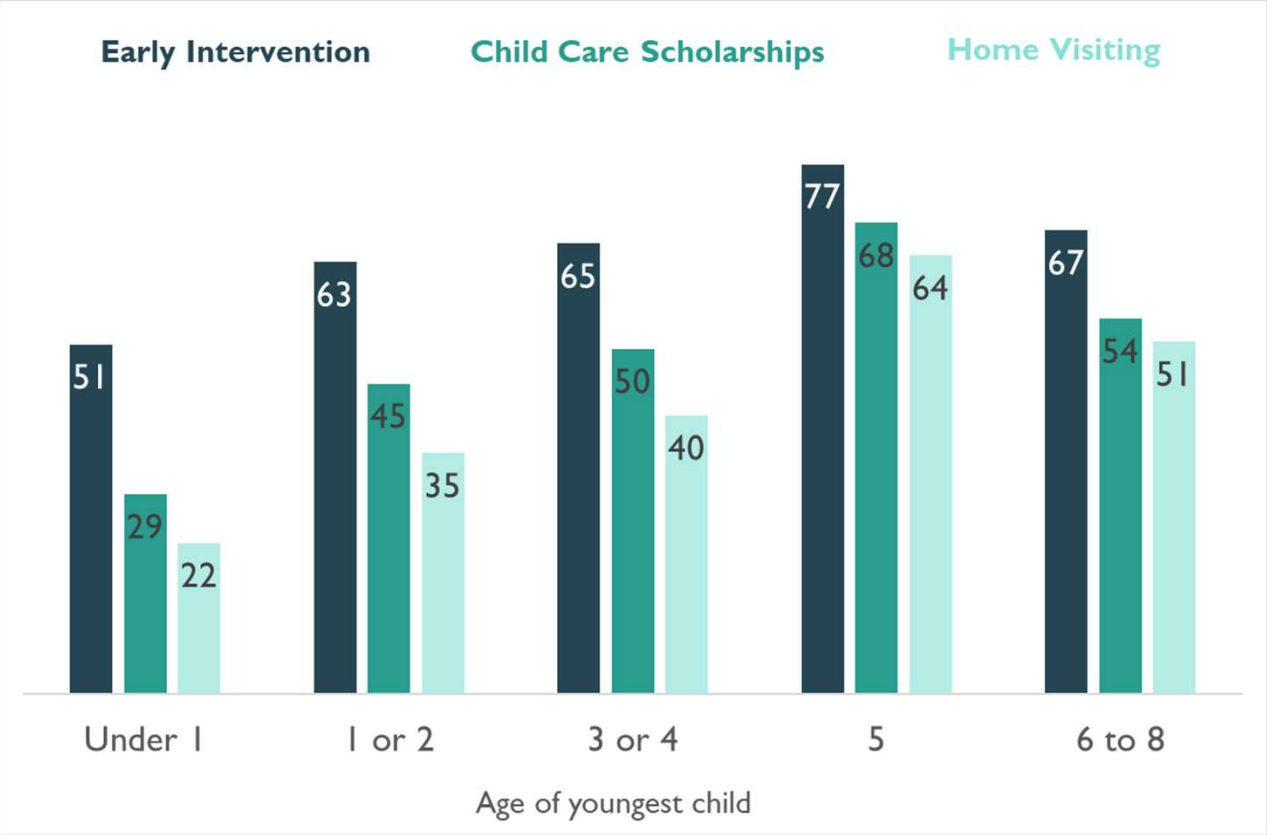
Source: RAND estimates via *New Hampshire's 2019-2020 B-5 Needs Assessment*; NCCP estimates via *New Hampshire's 2020-2021 Early Childhood Needs Assessment*. Carsey estimates via 2022 NH Family Needs Assessment Survey.

Lower income respondents were more often familiar with child-specific programs...



Percent of Respondents Who Have Heard of Each Program, by Family Income

...as were respondents whose children were older.



Percent of Respondents Who Have Heard of Each Program, by Age of Youngest Child

What about unmet service needs?

“[We need] social and behavioral support. Post-COVID these kids are re-learning socialization.”

New Hampshire parent

Via 2022 NH PDG Family Needs Assessment Survey

“Mental health support for kids has not been as accessible due to wait lists and staffing issues.”

New Hampshire parent

Via 2022 NH PDG Family Needs Assessment Survey

Unmet needs connected to findings from workforce surveys.

- Perception that pandemic-era disruptions have increased need.
- But capacity to meet those needs doesn't always exist.
- Community mental health centers must often focus on the most acute needs (often older children).
- Staffing shortages, low reimbursement rates, and high caseloads prohibit wider reach and specialized services

What opportunities exist to strengthen New Hampshire's child- and family-serving systems?

Making use of existing funds

- Consider how remaining ARPA funds can be invested in offsetting **costs for the sector** (including dedicated child care and local recovery funds)
- Record and share data that can help identify strategies that work or monitor ongoing conditions (tested in pandemic; statewide data systems)
- Focus outreach to enhance participation in existing child care assistance program

Policy opportunities with new funds

- Increase early childhood educator wages to match public school teachers (DC)
- Offer benefits like universal eligibility for child care subsidies (KY)
- Expand eligibility for child care subsidies to reach more families & increase their value (VT)
- Support a robust mix of providers through inclusionary state policy (e.g., licensing tech assistance) and local investment (e.g., tax breaks, in-kind contributions)

Questions?

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<https://carsey.unh.edu/center-for-social-policy-in-practice>