



Project Hope

Sensemaking Guide

What is Inside

Background

Community Profile

Project HOPE

Demographics

Emergent Patterns

Themes

Appendix

Story Pack

Selection of English stories

Selection of Spanish stories & translations

**Working Draft:
August 3, 2021**

Navigating the Guide

SenseMaker is a unique approach to narrative research. The results of a SenseMaker study are meant to guide decision-making and take action in a complex environment. Below are three things to keep in mind as you begin to explore this new form of data.



The unit (n) is the story. Most graphs show percentages based on county story counts.

Be active. The report supports your own sensemaking and decision-making. Nobody knows your experience better than you. If your interpretation and ideas differ, it's your responsibility to share.



Interpretations of the data are intentionally provocative to spur your thought process and actions. The writers of this report do not make any claim that their interpretations are the only 'right' ones.



Please email the Our Tomorrows team- ourtomorrows@ku.edu - if you have questions or would like clarification.

Project HOPE

The following statistics reflect the demographics of people who shared their story with Project HOPE partners. Project HOPE data is not generalizable – the patterns we see are only based on those who chose to share their story. In some cases, these demographics will not reflect the actual demographics of the region. Help us by asking people who aren't represented to share their story!

These percentages are determined from the datasets of Project HOPE (n=227).

Each chart is based on the number of stories shared and how respondents answered questions, not on general demographic data.

Demographics

GENDER

Project HOPE N=227

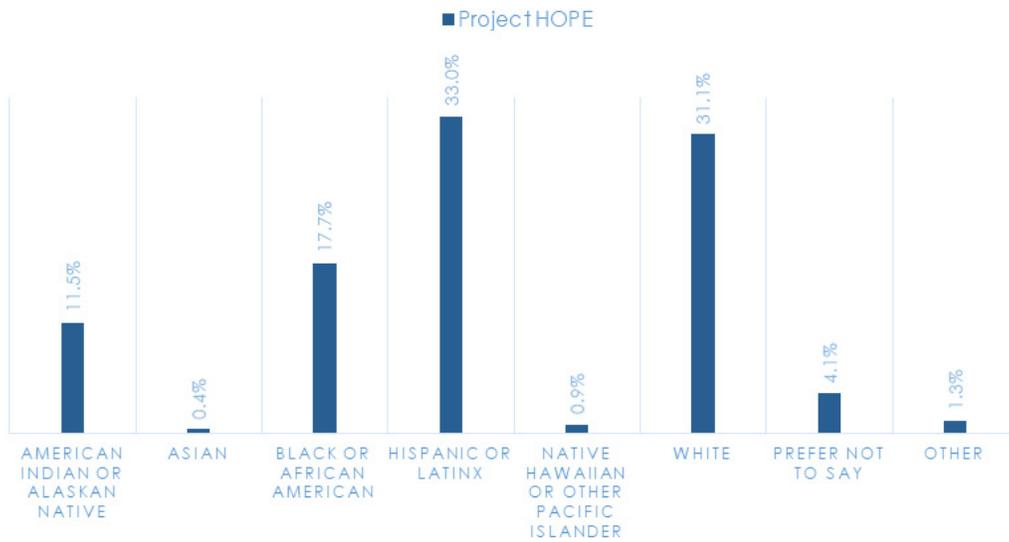


Project HOPE

Demographics

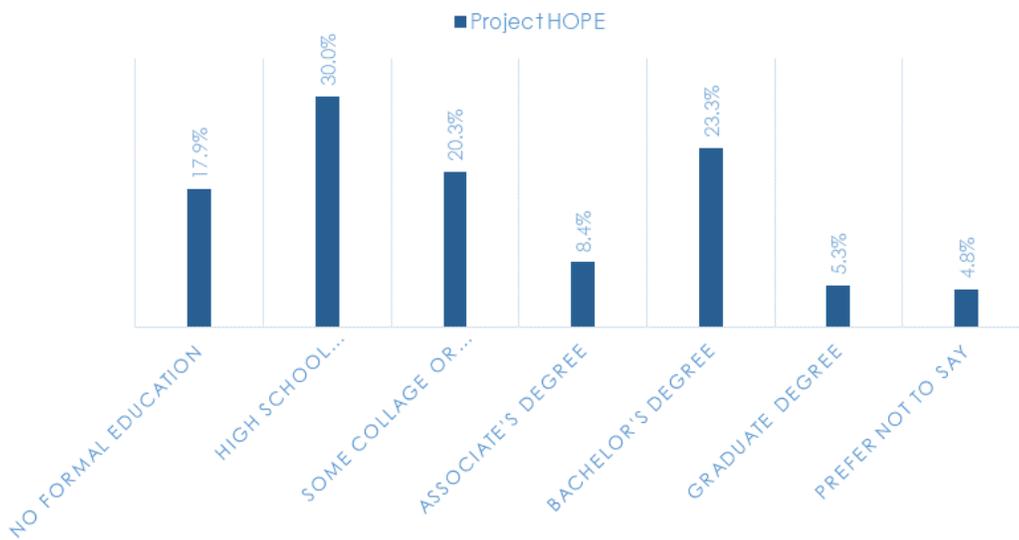
RACE

Project HOPE N=227



EDUCATION

Project HOPE N=227

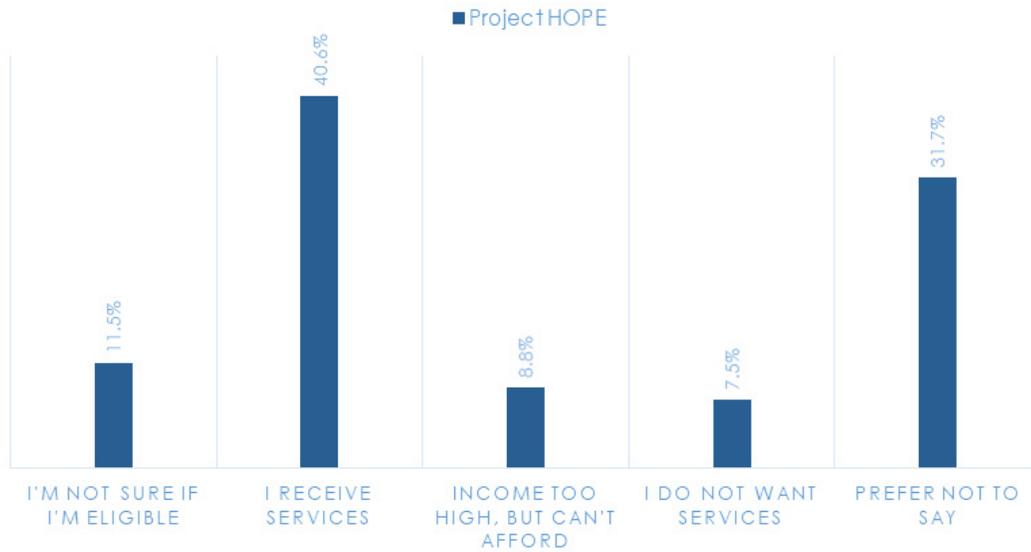


Project HOPE

Demographics

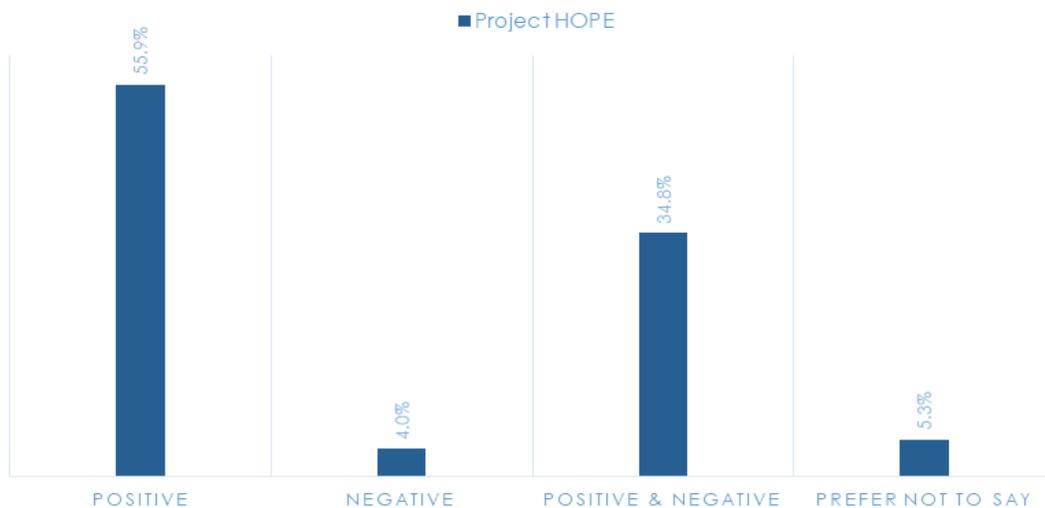
SERVICE ELIGIBILITY

Project HOPE N=227



EMOTIONAL EVALUATION

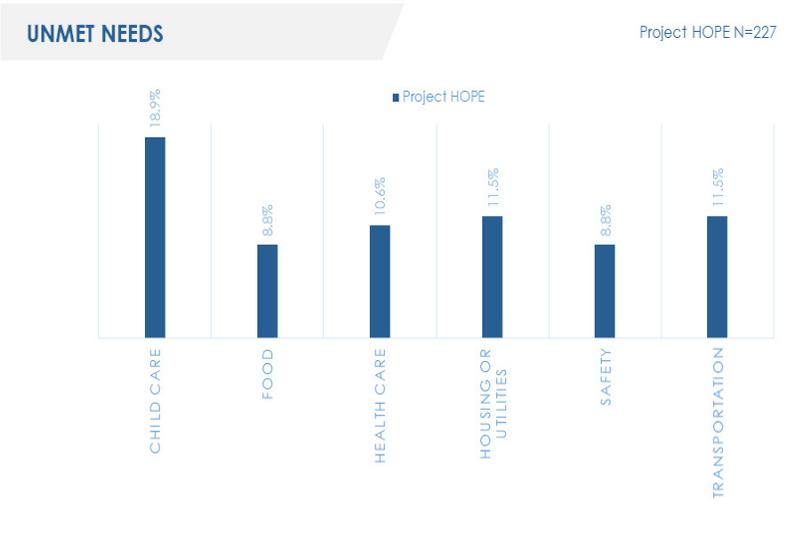
Project HOPE N=227



Project HOPE: Emergent Patterns



Unmet Needs



This chart shows what needs or services respondents struggled to obtain. It shows child care, housing and/or utilities, and transportation were frequently unmet needs in their experience.

What does this mean for how people are accessing and securing these services? Do you think the chart would look different pre- versus post-pandemic?

Are these unmet needs what you expected?

Providers & Services: Child Care



Similarly, this canvas shows us how easy or difficult it was for respondents to access child care and how they perceived child care services/providers.

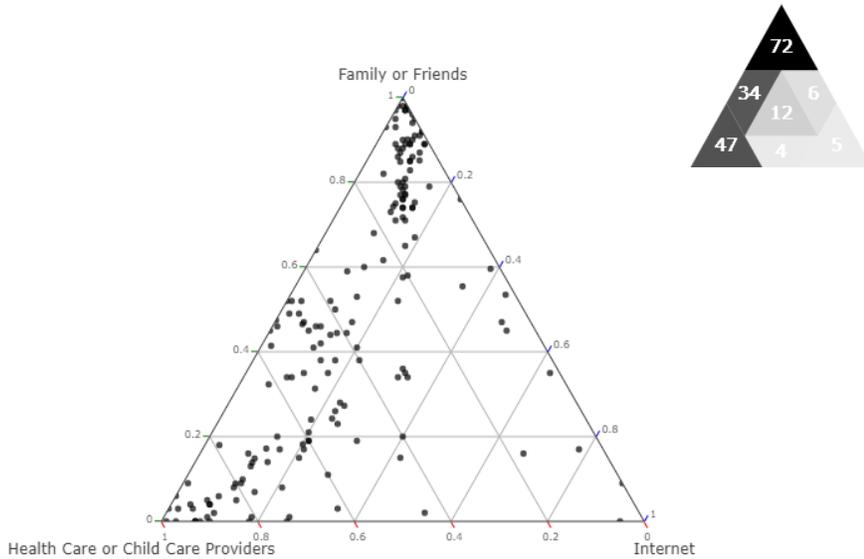
The data shows that for the most part, accessing childcare was either difficult or easy, with very little in between. Additionally, it shows that people erred on the side of distrust. What does this mean for how child care service providers interact with clients? What does this mean about the availability of services?

What do you want this chart will look like in the future? What action can be taken to move in that direction?

Project HOPE: Emergent Patterns



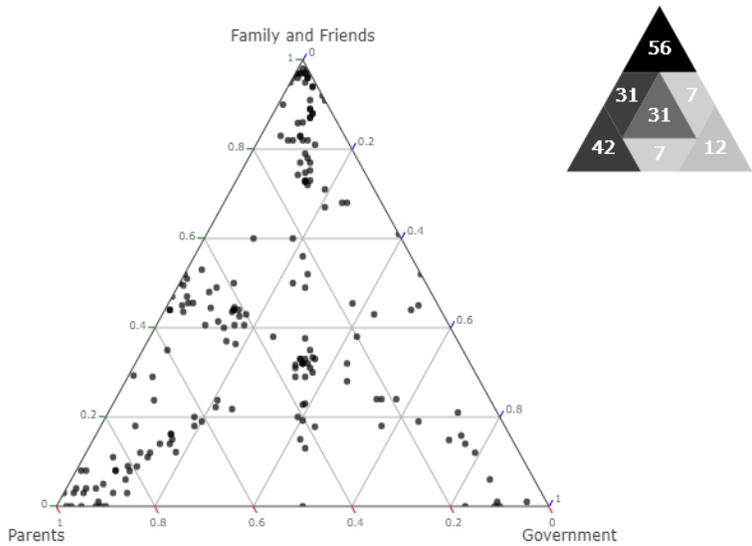
Decisions & Trusted Sources



These two charts show us who respondents receive trusted information from (top) and who is responsible for ensuring the health of the family and child (bottom).

Most respondents report that they make decisions based on trusted information from their family and friends and health care or child care providers. Very few respondents rely on the internet for trusted information. What does this say about how people view friends and family, but more importantly, how they view health care providers and child care providers? How can these populations be better utilized to deliver information to families?

Responsibility

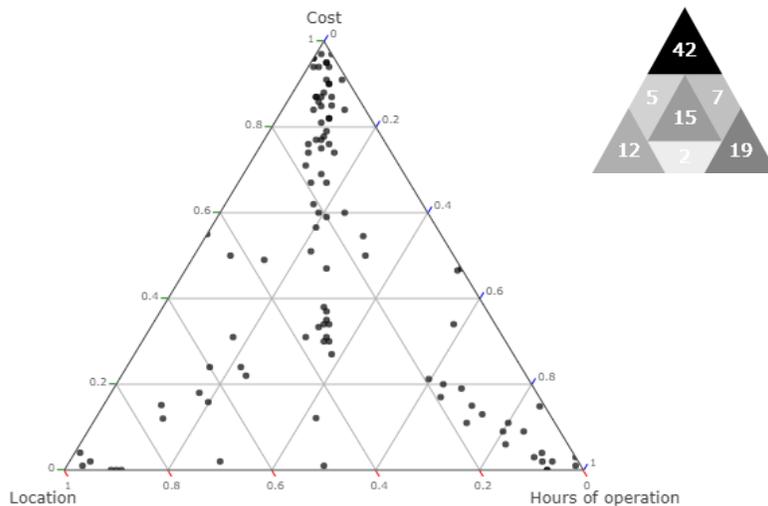


Additionally, respondents are also relying on friends and family and especially parents to make sure the family and child/ren are healthy. Very few respondents report the government as a possible source of care, why? What does this mean about how people view government and government services? How should government services be utilized?

Project HOPE: Emergent Patterns



Structural Conditions



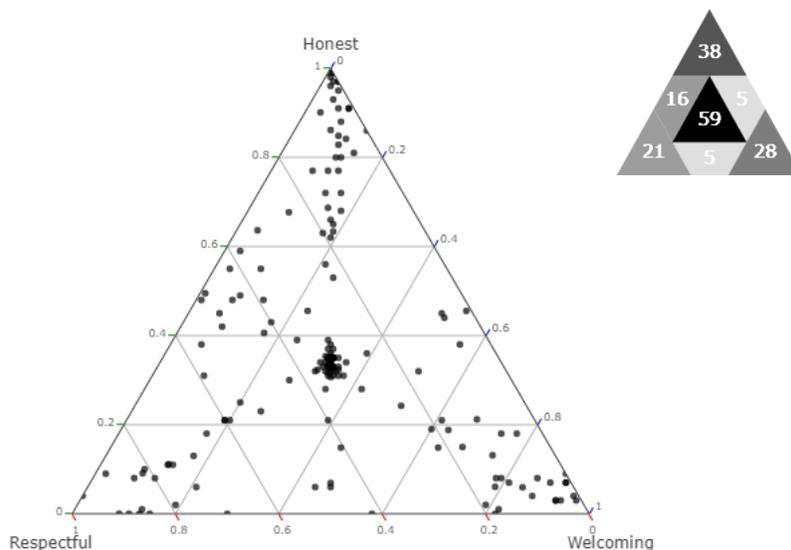
The chart to the left asks respondents how what structural conditions made accessing care difficult. Options include: location of services, cost of services, and service hours of operation

Project HOPE participants are reporting at a high rate cost plays a significant role in access to the care they need. Does this match your experiences with people in need of services?

We also see that a high concentration of Project HOPE respondents sharing that the quality of services they receive and service providers are for the most part respectful, honest, and welcoming, with a higher concentration selecting "honest" and a lower concentration selecting "respectful." What does this mean for service providers? What does this mean about how services are communicated and delivered?

What do these two charts say about how people view services and service providers? What does it mean for how people access services?

Perceptions: Quality



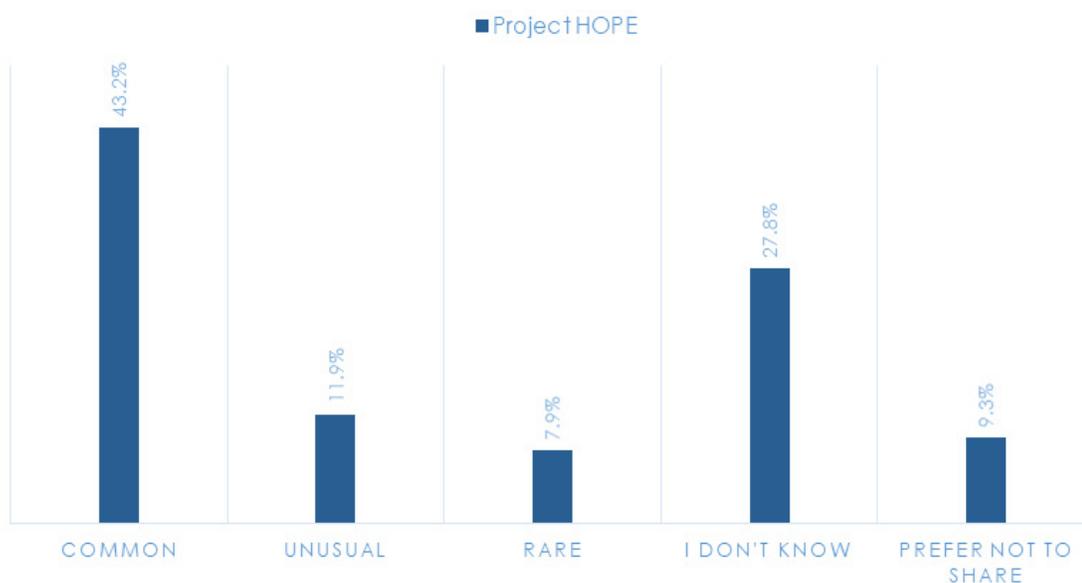
Themes: Frequency

98 Project HOPE respondents (43.2%) said the experience they shared is a common occurrence.

27 respondents (11.9%) said their experience was unusual, and only 18 respondents (7.9%) said their experience happened rarely.

Frequency

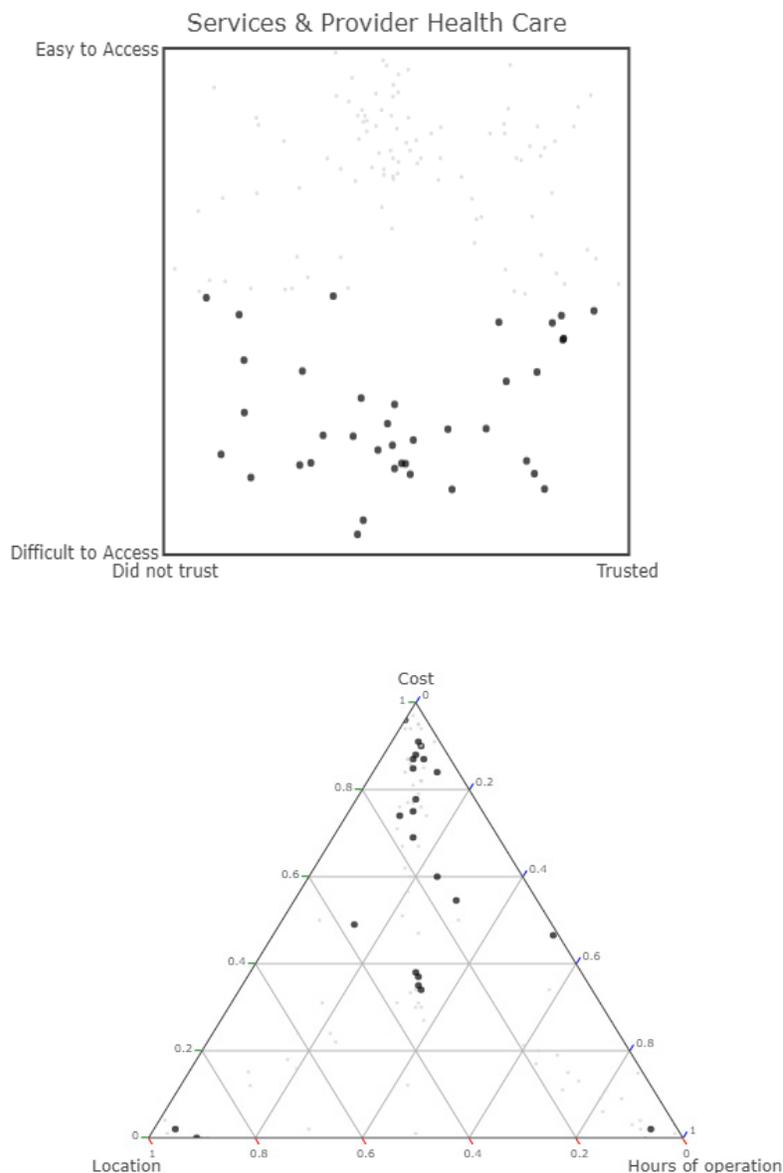
Project HOPE N=227



Themes: Accessing Health Care

Access to health care and health care costs are related.

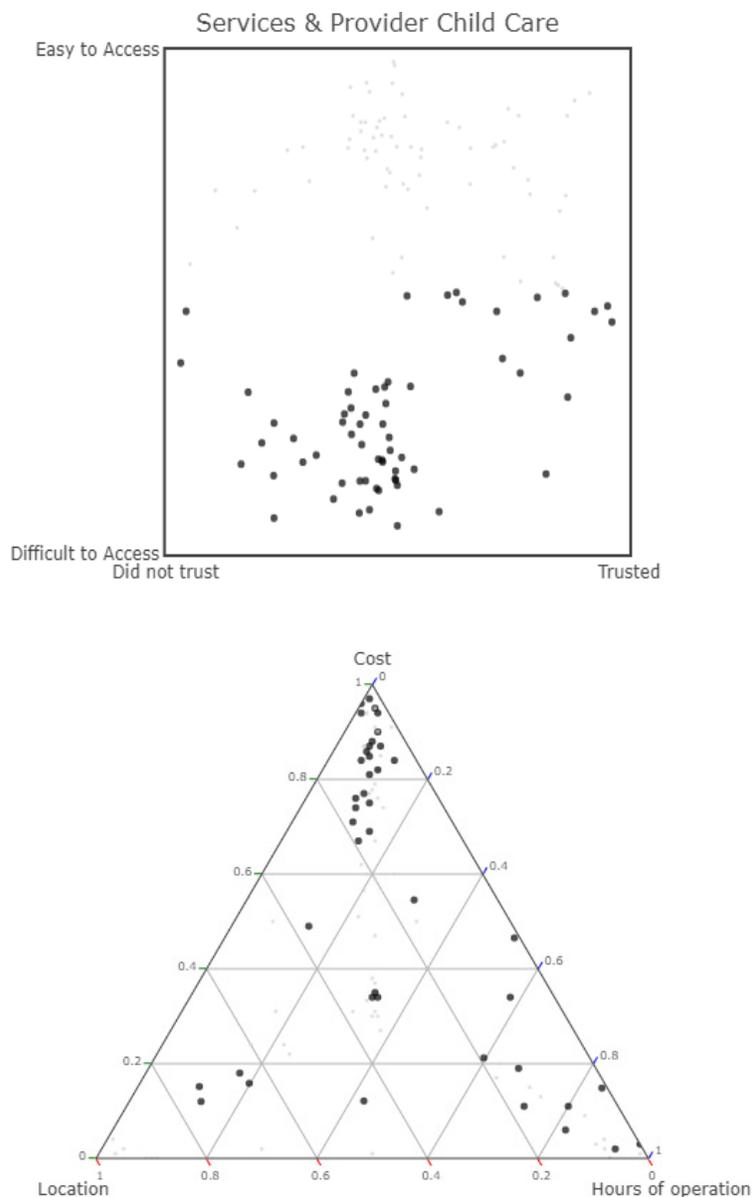
For respondents that said accessing health care services was difficult, regardless of their perception of the provider, are more likely to indicate cost of services as the significant limiting factor.



Themes: Accessing Child Care

Access to child care and child care costs are related.

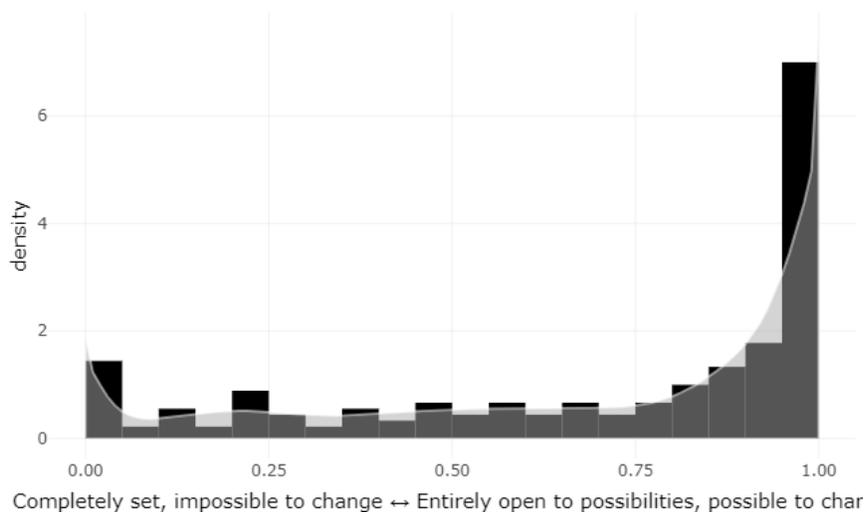
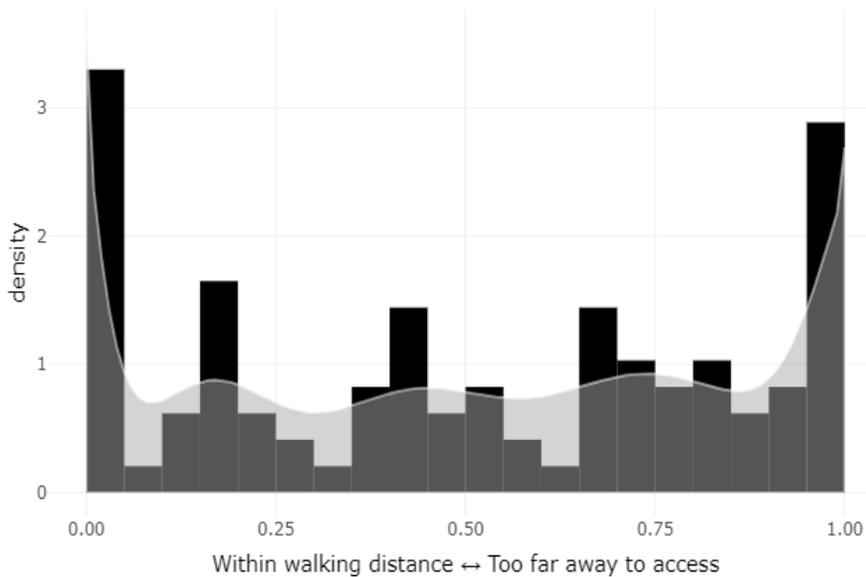
For respondents that said accessing child care services was difficult, regardless of their perception of the provider, are more likely to indicate cost of services, and less frequently, hours of operation as significant limiting factors.



Themes: Accessibility & Hope

Despite some difficulty in accessing services, people still maintain hope for themselves', their families' and their children's futures.

The majority of respondents reported that accessing services were either largely within walking distance or too far away to access. Despite this, nearly all respondents still feel their future is open and changeable.



Project HOPE

Appendix- Demographic Text

Gender

Project HOPE respondents identified as:

Female **93.8%**

Male **4.4%**

Non-binary/3rd Gender **0%**

Self-describe **0%**

Prefer not to say **1.8%**

Education

Project HOPE respondents identified as:

No formal education **17.9%**

High school diploma/GED **30.0%**

Some college or technical school **20.3%**

Associate's degree **8.4%**

Bachelor's degree **23.3%**

Graduate degree **5.3%**

Prefer Not to Say **4.8%**

Emotional Evaluation

Positive **55.9%**

Negative **4.0%**

Some positive, some negative **34.8%**

Prefer not to say **5.3%**

Race/Ethnicity

Project HOPE respondents identified as:

White **31.1%**

Hispanic or Latino/a **33.0%**

Black or African American **17.7%**

American Indian or Alaska Native **11.5%**

Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander **0.9%**

Other **1.3%**

Prefer Not to Say **4.1%**

Service Eligibility

I'm not sure if I'm eligible **11.5%**

I receive services **40.6%**

My income is too high but I still can't afford services **8.8%**

I do not want services **7.5%**

Prefer not to say **31.7%**

Prompt Selection

Families **80.6%**

Providers **19.4%**

Project HOPE: Story Pack

Childcare Barriers (167)

I was working with a mom who needed parenting classes. She did not have reliable childcare and therefore she frequently struggled making it to class on time or at all. At the time we did not have funding to cover childcare during classes for our parents, nor did we have a volunteer willing to provide it. This was a barrier because it prolonged the time it took for her to complete the class and was a hindrance to her truly learning the material because she was often stressed about childcare issues. Because she wasn't working or going to school at the time she did not qualify for childcare assistance through DHS.

Relying on self (168)

I moved into a place on my own with my child. I learned I could live on my own and rely more on my self to do things instead of asking so many people for help.

Working while pregnant and thru a pandemic (172)

When I became pregnant in August in 2019 we were thrilled. I was hoping this pregnancy would go smoother than my first. It ended up being harder I think. My morning sickness started before I found out and I found out at 3wks 3days. At the time I was a supervisor in the casino gas station. We were only fully staffed for the month of September. After that I started working 12hr shifts- 10hr is the normal schedule. It was a struggle because work was so hectic and stressful for me and the baby then I would come home mean and grumpy having not seen my family all day and only see them for an hr maybe two before bed but it was spent arguing with the kids. I felt so guilty and awful for how I was and finally started making changes but I still had work and morning sickness all day. I had to go to the hospital 3x for iv and fluid. Eventually he gave me medicine but got scared it was causing our daughter to have deformation and we had to get a scan for that. And my OB and rheumatologist (I also have fibromyalgia) told me the safest thing for me and baby would be medical marijuana and that scared me but I needed it to survive and baby to survive. I spent my New Years in the hospital while Luis was at work. The dr eventually said to be on bed rest but financially we couldn't do that. Then the pandemic happened and Luis was no longer allowed to be in the appointments and missed seeing her on scans. And we were worried for our friends and family but it was good because it caused the casino to shut down which allowed me to rest like the dr said. If it hadn't been for that I would've had our daughter early. Then they tell us he's the only one allowed in the room during birth when we wanted our moms in there. I couldn't imagine giving birth without my mom she was there for my oldest. I was induced so we had a scheduled time to be at the hospital and I was so nervous and didn't want the epidural because it messed up my back the first time. Birth goes differently this time and the pain is way more than I could've imagined and I had iv meds but eventually got the epidural which still affects me. During birth they had to give my oxygen twice and give me blood pressure medication. We are both safe and happy now but the dr told me not to have anymore because of birth being stressful on my body. The year since has still been stressful.

Overwhelmed New Mother (174)

As a new mother, my husband was diagnosed with a bipolar disorder. It was difficult to care for my child, my husband and myself. With the help of local resources, I was able to find childcare that we could afford. I was a new public school teacher and my parents helped us out financially since my husband had difficulty maintaining a job. I was overwhelmed as a new mother. Thank goodness my parents are financially stable and could support themselves and my family. Now, I have pursued another degree since I could not afford to care for my family on the pay of a public school teacher. My husband passed away and even with SSI, we qualified for financial assistance. It is sad that Oklahoma teachers do not get paid well enough to support their families.

Help from Oklahoma Childcare Resource and Referral (175)

I had a hard time locating childcare. My husband and I did not know what to look for or what was affordable. By working with Oklahoma Childcare Resource and Referral, we were able to get information and a listing of centers that met our needs. Not only did we get educated on what to look for, but we compared centers, large homes and family homes to determine what best fits the needs of our child.

Lack of help during COVID (176)

We could not find childcare. We found out we were pregnant at 5months. It was a shock as we were told it would never happen. We had limited time to be prepared. Since we were in the pandemic, we did not get to receive any training prior to delivery other than from our doctor and my mom (she is an early childhood specialist). We were fortunate to have my mom. If not, we would have been lost. She also helped us locate childcare. She told us what to look for and gave us a list of providers that had not had any DHS negative reports. We are still learning as new parents, but we were very disappointed in the resource that were lacking due to COVID.

Multiple jobs (179)

I have had several families in my childcare who's parents rarely were able to drop them off or pick them up because they were working multiple jobs to make ends meet. Working these jobs disqualified them from assistance, but not working them meant they couldn't pay bills. The children had their basic needs like food, water, and shelter met, but they were unable to spend much quality time with their parents.

Life's hard but there is always something to come out great . (180)

I got pregnant that 16 and had her that 17 and this is when Covid hit rilly bad so I had to stay inside but did get outside . After having Addison it was hard that the beginning but got ahold of it . And I join the cheer team for newkirk cord cheer team . I also work that the newkirk pool in town . And my mom asked me to take Parent class so I did and it rilly help me and understand things. Time has past and Addison was growing up fast. And this winter I was kick out and now live with a rilly close friends mom who has help me . And now I am working on get apartment and now Addison dad wants to be in her life so things run are going great.

“Working to break cycles” (178)

As a home-visiting program we often see many different new parents. These range from first time, single parents, little to no support, domestic violence, substance use, and more. One of my families that faced major barriers included a father who was a registered sex offender and a mother who previously lost custody of her children. These parents had a case worker in their lives prior to the birth of their first child together. They worked to maintain their stable housing, both of them were employed and maintained employment throughout the course of pregnancy. Unfortunately, the mother was let go when the birth ended in emergency caesarean needing to take a full 6 weeks off instead of the prior agreement of 4 weeks. The first road block appeared and with the help of our program and their case worker she was able to apply for unemployment benefits reliving some pressure. Since the family was lowered income they were approved for the baby to continue with sooner care insurance. After the first bump the parents continued moving forward. Their motto was “we will do whatever we need for our baby”. The family participated in “Breaking the Cycle” class of explaining how trauma, child abuse/neglect, and substance abuse is circular. The family struggled having an appropriate and affordable daycare provider with an open spot once it was time for mom to return to work.

Life happens (181)

i got pregnant and was very excited to have my baby. I ended up having gestational diabetes. This was very hard because it required me to monitor how I eat and being pregnant you crave random things. I did feel very lonely during my pregnancy as i had a very unresponsive husband. He was not emotionally attached to me or even seem to care or be part of the growing belly inside me. We had planned this baby because he wanted another child. It was not a great experience for me I thought he would be more excited but it almost felt that it made our relationship suffer. I had a threaten miscarriage during second trimester which forced me to be on bed rest for like a week. It was a very scary time because i left work bleeding and it terrified me. I think it was the only moment my partner seemed to just hold my hand but not reassure me. I was depressed and wish I would of gotten more support to help me emotionally through the entire pregnancy. I still made it out okay.

Tubal Regrets (184)

The first year of our third child's last was extremely difficult. He needed physical therapy for his neck. Taking care of him was hard enough, but have two young girls made things harder. If my husband could have stayed home, it might have helped, but FMLA doesn't really did really help enough that he could take enough time off work. Instead, I took care of the kids mostly alone and didn't have anything left to take care of myself. I was barely getting by, and then he bit me (while nursing). That broke something in me, and I decided to have my tubes tied that day. I never wanted to go through that again. Or so I thought. Now I would gladly take that back to birth more children. Instead, we're trying to adopt, which will be good, but I strongly regret the tubal ligation.

Housing authority needs to be more organized. (188)

I don't like going to the housing authority to fill out information they already have on my file when doing a change of income or someone moving in with you. I have to repeat everything on paper when all they need is the new information. It's time consuming. They are also not to lienate on documents. They are very particular about things, like having to be on letterheads and such.

A Better Me (190)

I currently am receiving DHS child care for my 8 month old & it has helped me tremendously. Without their help, I would have a hard time being able to work & proceed into my career of nursing. A few years ago I was able to get on section 8. That allowed me to get a home for me & my two oldest kids when I was going through my divorce & didn't have employment at the time. I lived on Section 8 for about 4 years. Also during that time I received food stamps which allowed me to feed my children. I didn't have to stress about whether or not the kids & I were gonna be able to eat. This is unfortunately my 2nd time taking these parenting classes but I can say that this time around I am much more involved & willing & ready to make a change. I very much want to break the cycle & be a better mom to my 3 amazing kids. This year I have also had the pleasure of attending Domestic Violence classes & it has been a huge eye opener for me. It has taught me my self worth & to recognize gaslighting & red flags. I believe that I can finally break the cycle of toxic relationships.

SoonerCare was our Lifeline (191)

I became pregnant as I was switching jobs and lost my health insurance because my new job only offered to pay \$100 each month for the premium. Even with the \$100, I could not afford health insurance. A friend suggested that I apply for sooner care. I was approved for the soon to be Sooners program because my income wasn't very much but it wasn't small enough for me to get the full sooner care. At about 16 weeks an ultrasound revealed that my unborn baby had a very fast heart rate that could indicate a heart defect. I was referred to a perinatal specialist. By the time I was able to get in to see the specialist, the heart rate had corrected itself. Not long after I was diagnosed with gestational diabetes and was having to go back to the perinatal specialist for that issue as well. I had diabetic supplies that I would have to pick up and didn't have to pay for because I had sooner care. When I gave birth to my son, he was born in respiratory failure. He was airlifted to a different city where he stayed in the NICU until he was stabilized. Without the the help of sooner care, my son wouldn't be here and/or I wouldn't have been able to afford his care.

Unexpected last minute results (194)

I had a wonderful pregnancy until when my water broke and I was rushed to the hospital. I was rushed to the operation room because my child's heart started beating slowly. They had to do an emergency c-section. My husband ran out of the room the moment he saw all the nurses and doctor surrounding my baby. I couldn't move and was in utter shock. My son had to have resuscitation. I kept looking to his direction with out even being able to blink. After the longest 2 minutes of my life I heard his cry. This was my first pregnancy and i am thankful the doctors took great care of us.

When it rains it pours... (204)

My entire last pregnancy was a complete struggle. My step daughter was dropped off at my front door step by her grandfather claiming her mother just couldn't handle her. In the upcoming weeks we realized she missed a whole semester of school and didn't have any grades and was way behind in school ...also hadn't been to see a doctor for a check up and had an std, needed glasses but wasn't taken to get any ..it was a lot so my husband and I decided that we would file for custody. All the while covid plus pregnancy. It was rough but we made room for her. Since she was 14 she needed her own room, we had to bunk our 2 boys who are 10 and 11 and couldn't be more different in the same room. So they weren't too happy but we made it work. She got the same treatment as our boys did when it came to discipline and school and everything.. Soon after baby came the lawyers decided in mediation that because the child's preference was to live with her mother and was not in any immediate danger we had to give her back to her mother. Unfortunately both my boys have suffered with the many changes from already being ADHD and ODD now we can add anger issues and depression so we had to start therapy and other measures. Also she is also suffering again her As and Bs turned to Ds and Fs. Started skipping classes and disrespecting teacher constantly in ISS. The school calls constantly with complaint after complaint but somehow she's better off in the care of her mother. One of my boys is currently in an inpatient hospital because his anger was uncontrollable. We are still overcoming all the obstacles today and baby just turned 1 yr earlier this month. In the last year in a half many health care providers and therapist even DHS, and different resources were more than helpful in providing many different kinds of help from helping with bills and food to new shoes and a laptop just so we can continue to pay for the lawyer who helped but couldn't help.

Baby Overcomes Difficult Start with Therapy (212)

Our second son was born in April 2013 to a mother who tested positive for multiple illegal substances, gestational diabetes and preeclampsia. Shortly after bringing him home, we noticed he had difficulty coordinating his sucking motion, causing taking a bottle to be challenging for him. We were put in touch with Soonerstart to have him evaluated for developmental delays. After the initial testing, it was determined that he was indeed behind on almost all developmental milestones even at just a few months old. We continued working with a Sooner Start therapist for over a year, and he made great gains and every area.

Government Insurance (217)

She was a first time mother, with no insurance. I walked her through applying for insurance. They assigned her to a doctor that had no bedside manners. She was stuck with this doctor until the baby was born and then was able to get the pediatrician she wanted for her baby.

Elements of life! (219)

I had a mom who joined our 13-week course "Raising Highly Capable kids". We discussed the 40 developmental elements that help a child grow and learn to thrive. Coming from a hispanic culture it's hard for them to ask for help and don't take suggestions lightly. She's currently pregnant with her 6th child so venting to us was of great help and learning new things to help her children succeed was her main goal she felt she finally accomplished. After finishing our 13-week course she walked out feeling more confident about her situation.

Pregnant at 15 (222)

Having my first child at the age of 15 was kinda of scary I had no clue on how to take care of a child nor how I was going to finish school with a baby. Thank God for a supportive family and dedicated mother that set aside her life to help me raise my little one and complete my last 3 years of high school.

The Help I needed (231)

I am a foster parent to a relative. This was an unexpected event. I could not find childcare, didn't know how to find childcare and have no additional income to help support this child. After reaching out to Northwest childcare resource and referral, they help me with finding childcare and also talk to me about subsidy and other resources to help me provide quality care from my niece. They were a blessing. After working with them I found a great daycare that loves my niece and is affordable for me. They also gave me additional resources like diapers and assistance with other agencies to help get needed supplies.

Please help (232)

Our Montessori school closed. I needed find Daycare fast. I spoke to some friends and they suggested I call Northwest childcare resource and referral. They gave me information on how to find a quality childcare and a number to get assistance in finding here in my town. After visiting with them, I found a great place. My children are extremely happy and it is very close to my home.

Increased need for care and funding for providers (233)

Child care providers need heroes pay too. During Covid, I was open without interruption. I cared for 7 children. When a local center closed, IA increased my enrollment to 12 and hired an additional employee. This was needed in our community. We had children with no place to go. Parents were very stressed and didn't know where to find quality care in our town.

Finding a Place to Call Home (236)

During the first year of my child's life I did not have a place of my own and was dependent on different family members for a place to stay. During the first year my child and I lived in three different family members homes as I looked for an environment I wanted for my child. As a single mother with one child state assistance was not enough to live on our own and I was not aware of any other programs that were out there to help. I am very fortunate to have had family that was able to babysit and let me stay with them while I went to work and got my life together. I saved and moved into a more stable and permanent living situation, I found an amazing home daycare center, and purchased a vehicle shortly before my child's first birthday. By my child's second birthday our life was completely different and still can't imagine what I would have done with the support system I had in my family.

Motherhood (238)

The first year I became a mother was extremely hard. I was new at it and didn't really know what to do or how to provide. Over the years I've learned how to not only provide but teach my children also.

Support groups (242)

During the first year of my youngest daughters life i was struggling. Raising two kids with minimal help was a struggle to say the least. I was struggling to balance my time as a mother and time to care for myself. I felt as though i couldnt stay on top of my daily task. I definetly could have benefited from some mommy and me support groups during that first year of my youngest life. Things got better once she got older and was able to play with her bigger sister, but things were pretty lonely for a while.

Childcare Saved my Job! (246)

Trying to find school age care during the height of COVID was very difficult. By contacting our local childcare referral agency I was able to find daytime schools support and care for my child. Thank goodness! I was still working as an essential worker snd the childcare saved my job!

Childcare Resource and Referral is Amazing (247)

During COVID I had to close my daycare. The health of my family was my primary concern. The childcare agency. In our region helped to find care for all my children. Their help was so appreciated by me snd my families. I hated closing but felt so much better because of their help.

Depression (248)

I struggled with depression after pregnancy and I worked with my pcp my ob and healthy start to keep my communicating and focused.

NWCCRR is a Godsend (249)

It was so hard to be a childcare provider during COVID. We couldn't get needed supplies and we were so busy! We couldn't even get meat for our business.Out if frustration, I contacted our NWCCRR to see if they could help. Not only did they contact area grocery stores, but, they also delivered free PPP items to EVERY childcare facility. The ladies made sure that businesses realized we were ESSENTIAL and we were able to buy what we needed to feed and care for our children. I will never be able to repay these ladies! They were a godsend!

Thank you for helping me (252)

I was in a abusive relationship and needed support. I worked with the local YWCA and they connected me with CDSA. CDSA helped me with parent training and finding a living childcare home for my baby while I looked for a job and an apartment. If it wasn't for the YWCA and CDSA. I would not have made it. I am so thankful for their help when I was at my lowest. I share this story with others so they know that there are great services in Enid!

Postpartum (253)

The hardest part after childbirth is healing time as well as the postpartum depression. It helps tremendously to have support

Don't give up (261)

When I was pregnant, I was strung out on meth, 40 yrs old, didn't care about anything besides drugs. I went to treatment in October got kicked out that December lived on the streets 5 months pregnant scared out of my mind got back into another rehab and had my baby 6 weeks early I was kicked out of rehab because I couldn't stay there because I needed to stay with my baby at the hospital and when it came time to go home they opened up a DHS case I found somewhere to go and take him with me but I ended up relapsing in May a year ago and lost my son for 2 months I went to rehab and July because I never had finished while I was pregnant I got my son 6 weeks after I got to rehab he got to stay there with me for 4 months we got out we have our own apartment I have a car my driver's license and almost a year of clean time learning how to be a mom my life is so much better than it was and I just want to teach my son the right way

Mom of Two. (264)

I am a mother of two. During the birth of my second child I had my mother watch my first child. It was the one of the hardest times in my life. Not only was I going through the birth of my son but being away for 4 days from my daughter was very emotional for me. I am a stay at home mom and had never been away from her for more than 24 hours. I would look at pictures of her and cry. I am thankful that I had my husband with me. I am blessed that I have a great support system outside of my own home as well. Without my support system I couldn't have done any of these things. Having a family is a huge responsibility that I do not take lightly but it is also the most rewarding thing I've experienced my whole life.

My first baby (265)

I had a baby in 2009 and my boyfriend made me move out, he was mentally and verbally abusive. I kept all of my things and refused to give me anything for my son. My sister helped me until I found a job at a restaurant. While I lived with my sister I was on the TANF program and I had to 'volunteer' for my 300 a month. I really worked a full time job for 300 a month. My son was sick one day so I called in to take him to the doctor and the dhs caseworker called me and yelled at me. I hung up on her, never went back for any help and I finally found a job. I saved money for a month and bought a car. I moved into a house shortly after that. My son was what kept me going through all of this.

With family and love everything is possible. (274)

When I first got divorce on 2015 for like 2 years I struggle with working and pregnant with our second child, and not getting child support being on bed rest and getting only a \$200 a week, I had my mom help me with money and babysitting my son that at the time he was 3 years old, until my second son was born and I was back to work is when I got back on my feet and being doing well every since then.

needing extra money (278)

had a family in the neighborhood that was needing help financially so I was able to help with that as well as watch her children a couple of nites a week so she could work an extra shift.

it takes a village sometimes (279)

I have a parent that works in another town and his child attends school in another while they both reside in another. This is difficult for them so I take the child to school on my way to work as I work in the same town she goes to school and he has someone else pick them up.

parenting classes helped (281)

I had a rough childhood and wasn't sure what to expect as a new mother. I was able to take some parenting classes through my cousin to make me more aware of what I needed to do and make sure that my baby was safe in her environment as well beyond the way I was raised.

Anything is possible (287)

"Amy" (not real name) came to our OB clinic pregnant and addicted to meth. To tell you the truth, she was a complete mess. She was unable to hold a coherent conversation, had difficulty filling out paperwork and could barely sit still. As we attempted to talk she made it clear that she wanted to get clean and sober and she desperately wanted to keep her baby. She knew it would not be an easy road for her. As her care coordinator I referred her to an addiction clinic and started looking for a rehab that could take her. Long story short, she was able to stop using drugs, got into a rehab facility for women and by the next time I saw her a month later she was a different person, still anxious, still unsure of herself, but clean and sober and willing to put in the work that it would take to keep this baby. Over the next 7 months she came to all of her prenatal appointments and I was able to share information with her on all things pregnancy. She was hungry for the knowledge and wanted to make sure that she did everything right so that her baby would have the best chance possible. Her life was not easy, she got kicked out of a couple programs, used once, lacked transportation and suffered from several mental health disorders. But she had a goal-keep this baby. She called me often, I helped out when I could. She delivered early and spent weeks in the hospital while her baby was in the NICU. When they left the hospital she was ok for a while but started using again and DHS stepped in and took the baby. It was a wakeup call! She realized that she could lose it all. She started working even harder and eventually got him back, went to a rehab where she could keep him with her and started setting goals for herself. Today she is over a year sober, has her own car and apartment, is looking to start working soon and is living a life that she never thought possible. We still keep in touch, she is coming to see me today. I am so glad that this story had a happy ending.

How can anyone win with these problems? (289)

After I had my daughter, I went back to work and made too much to get food stamps help but not enough to live let alone feed my daughter. My struggle was both emotional and financial. WIC provided some formula, but it was the bare minimal and I didn't have enough money to buy more formula. I had to make the decision to take her off of formula early and the guilt was unbearable!

Finding It Early (297)

My child was pretty easy going and I had help from my mom and sister. After a week in the hospital I was able to take my baby home after tests found that my child had a disorder that was managed by a strict diet. With a special baby formula that was shipped monthly we were able to take care of my child's special needs. At about 6 months my baby was admitted to the hospital which became a common trip for our family due to the disorder. Thanks to having the state medical insurance and a doctor who was eager to learn more and help us we have been able to manage my child's disorder. My child was walking at 8 months and learned to crawl following another baby at their first birthday party.

Community Resource Help (304)

I found out about this organization called Hope that helped me get diapers and wipes. Mom stated without this organization, she would not be able to afford diapers and wipes. Mom stated that EmpowerOKC has really helped her two daughters with the mentorship program. Mom stated she does not know English and has really appreciated the help of the mentors last summer. Mom stated they really helped the girls not stay behind in school.

Moms Need Friends Too (309)

After our twins were born I was forced to make a choice, as every woman must, to either stay home or return to work. I loved my job as a social worker but it did not pay enough for daycare for two babies so the decision in my case was rather easy. However, transitioning from working full time to staying home full time was not so easy. Not only did I lose my health care and other benefits, as well as my entire income to help support our growing family, I also lost a lot of friends and a lot of support. I no longer found myself conversing with my coworkers about my hard day at "work" or my lack of sleep or my need for advice in all areas of motherhood and more. It may seem like a small barrier to overcome compared to having to find healthcare or make ends meet, but to a new mother, the lack of mental and emotional support was just as big as these other stressors that come with transition. It's been almost two years since that day I made the decision to not return to work and while I am happy with that decision overall, I still find it challenging to leave my house, make new friends, and find new experiences (largely due to Covid shutdowns). Raising a family in today's time is hard enough as it is, but the lack of open and available public spaces to take my children (and myself) has been a huge barrier to our social and emotional needs.

Rural Transit is vital (311)

Living in a rural area, I experienced problems with transportation when my car broke down and I wasn't able to get it fixed for a while. You don't realize how important a vehicle is until you don't have one. We have a public transport that was available for a reasonable cost but the initial scheduling was problematic. I had to get my child to daycare and get to work but the transit wasn't real flexible with their schedules and I ran late. Fortunately my employer was okay with it and I didn't lose points. I'm extremely thankful that someone referred me because I really didn't have any idea how I would get to work and my child to daycare. All my friends work or don't have cars either. ~~~~~
~~~~~

### Juntos si se puede salir adelante. (202)

## Project HOPE:

# Story Pack - Spanish Language Stories

~~~~~

Juntos si se puede salir adelante. (202)

Hola buenas Noches primero que nada quiero dar las gracias al programa de apoyo de Early Bird y a sus colaboradores por su apoyo que nos brindan a mis hijos y familia, este programa me a ayudado en muchas cosas primero que nada en lo económico con pañales y algunos juguetes y actividades para mis hijos y también me an dado el apoyo con algunos tips de como alimentar y educar a mis hijos este programa a sido de gran ayuda para mi familia y con el hemos crecido mas y no dejarnos rendir por esta pandemia que de una u otra manera nos atraso mucho economicamente y gracias a esta ayuda que nos brindan hemos salido juntos adelante.

Yes, we can move forward together. (202)

Hello, good evening. First of all, I want to thank the Early Bird support program and its collaborators for their support they give to my children and family. This program has helped me in many things, first of all, economically with diapers and some toys and activities for my children, and they have also given me support with some tips on how to feed and educate my children. This program has been of great help to my family, and with it we have grown more and have not let ourselves give up because of this pandemic, which in many ways has set us back a lot economically. And thanks to this help that they give us, we have moved forward together.

~~~~~

Crecimiento (319)

Se me juntaron varias cosas al inicio de mi embarazo, me dio COVID y los achaques del embarazo. El estar aislada fue muy dificil. Quedé como lejana de todo mundo y a lo largo del embarazo eso se mantuvo, me irritaba todo, todo me fastidiaba, coo que todo el embarazo me quedé distante de la gente. La depresión postparto me afectó bastante, el cambio hormonal fue muy fuerte, fue como separarme de mi bebé, pero realmente no fue así, solo lo viví de esa forma. La lactancia fue muy dolorosa, es bonito pero fue muy dificil de acoplarme, creo que si hubiera sido diferente no me hubiera afectado tanto la depresión postparto. Pero como que ninguno de los dos sabiamos lo que estabamos haciendo. El quería seguir comiendo y yo no le podía dar; y yo quería seguir dándole pero no nos acoplamos. Yo sentía que lo estaba defraudando. Ahora que he regresado al trabajo me he sentido culpable, siento que él no va a recibir la misma atención. Y no estar cuando él sonría o lllore, me hace sentir culpa.

### Growth (319)

Several things came together at the beginning of my pregnancy: I got COVID and the pains of pregnancy. Being isolated was very difficult. I stayed far away from the world, and throughout the pregnancy that stayed the same. Everything irritated me, everything annoyed me, and throughout the pregnancy I remained distant from people. Postpartum depression affected me a lot, the hormonal change was very strong, it was like separating me from my baby, but it really wasn't like that, I just lived that way. Breastfeeding was very painful. It is beautiful, but it was very difficult to latch. I think that if it had been different, postpartum depression would not have affected me so much, but neither of us knew what we were doing. He wanted to keep eating, and I couldn't give it to him; and I wanted to continue giving but we did not latch. I felt like I was letting him down. Now that I have returned to work, I have felt guilty. I feel that he is not going to receive the same attention. And not being there when he smiles or cries makes me feel guilty.

~~~~~

Cosas que pasan al cuerpo (359)

Teniamos una companera que estaba embarazada y se le complico su embarazo. Tuvo un buen embarazo todos los meses pero al ultimo tuvieron que hacer cesaria. Ella nos conto que fue algo muy sorprendente porque apesar de ver tenido buen embarazo y muy relajado tuvo cesaria. Incluso hemos tenido estas conversaciones de que muchas estamos teniedo cesaria y el porque? Sera que tenemos mucho estres y nos cause que el cuerpo no pueda naturalmente evolucionar? Fue una experiencia muy triste fisicamente para mi compane

Things that happen to the body (359)

We had a coworker who was pregnant, and her pregnancy became complicated. She had a good pregnancy for months, but at the end they had to do a cesarean. She told us that it was very surprising because despite having had a good and very relaxed pregnancy, she had a cesarean. Also, we have had these conversations that many of us have had cesareans and why? Could it be that we have a lot of stress that causes our bodies to not naturally evolve? It was a very sad experience physically for my coworker.