



**Ridge Meadows Early Childhood  
Development Committee Parent  
Barriers Survey**

**Survey I & II**

**September 2011**

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## Methodology

Based on time, flexibility, and availability of staff an 'in person interview' survey based out of several key locations in our community that represents the cultural, social, and economic diversities within Ridge Meadows will be offered. Family Place drop-ins, Parent & Tots (Parks and Rec), StrongStart Centres, Mother Goose programs, Community Parenting Program, Foodbanks, PALS, Service Providers and Community events were some sites for survey collection.

The first survey's 333-sample was collected over a period of three and a half months from mid November 2009 to February 2010 (Survey 1). The second survey's 153-sample was collected over 4 months from March 2011 to June 2011 (Survey 2). All parents or caregivers of children under the age of 6 living in Ridge Meadows were eligible to participate in the Parent Barrier survey. Thirty three surveys from the first sample and sixteen surveys from the second sample were not able to be used for illegibility purposes.

Collection of the first survey was overseen by the Coordinator for RMECDC and trained administrators. The second survey was 'tweaked' to be easier to fill out and therefore service providers and program administrators had their clientele fill it out without any trained help.

A total of 15 questions were asked of respondents and the completed surveys were processed and analyzed by the Coordinator for the Ridge Meadows ECD Committee.

## Margin of Error

The results of a 333-sample survey are considered accurate to within  $\pm 5.32\%$  of what a census would show 95% of the time. The results of a 153-sample survey are considered to be accurate to within  $\pm 7.89\%$  of what a census would show 95% of the time. In other words, if all Ridge Meadows parents/caregivers with children under the age of six were surveyed, the results of that poll would be within about 5 and 8 (respectively) percentage points of the results of these surveys, 19 times out of 20.

## Introduction

The first survey collection in 09/10 was collected with the intention of using the results to guide our ECD Committee towards Integration of Services; a primary goal in our strategic plan at that time. With the changing global economic climate and the effects of lack of table funding it was imperative that our Committee undergo a new strategic planning directive and regroup our efforts towards the trend of increasing poverty, while tackling our integration goal from a different direction.

The results of the first survey conducted were then filed until such a time that we could use the information to the best of our ability. A year passed and with new directives, deliverables and updated goals the RMECDC decided to conduct the same survey and use it as a benchmark to guide us in our efforts of advocacy and informing our community over the course of our current strategic plan.

The results of this benchmark survey and a recent poverty report conducted by our local ECD table will be used in planning for a Community Forum, themed on poverty, which we will be hosting in the spring of 2012.

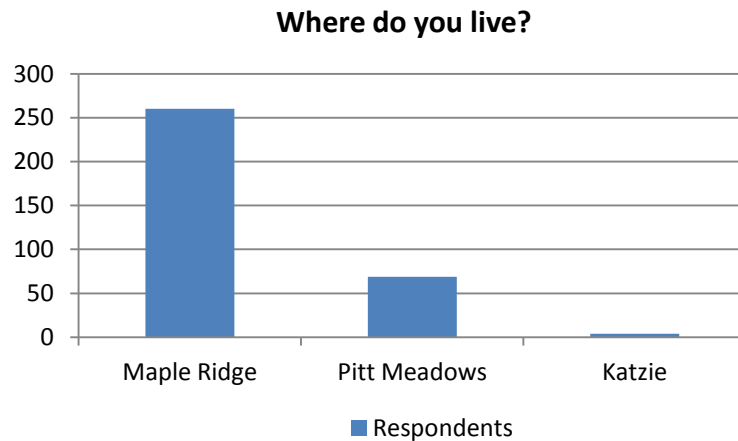
The first section of this report **describes** the survey population by means of six demographic questions asked of all participants.

The second section details the results of the remaining nine questions asked on the survey. Individuals were asked about their awareness of resources, programs and services; the strengths and challenges of assets in our community; and barriers and other important issues facing families today.

A comments section followed the survey which is weaved throughout the survey as this information was deemed relevant to particular sections of the report.

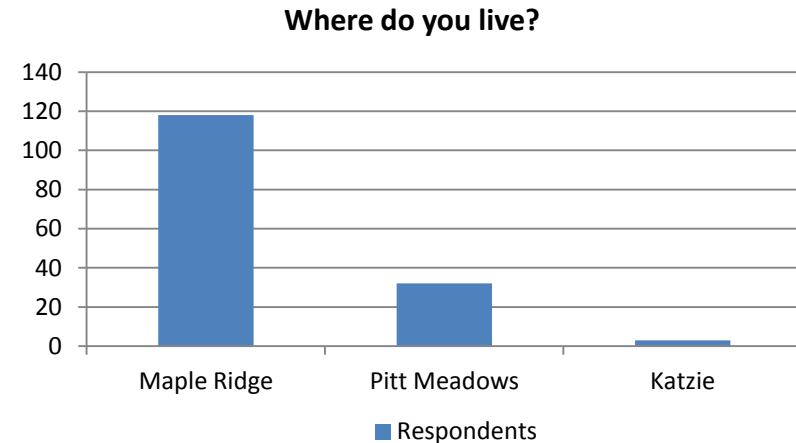
## Section 1: Describing the Survey Sample

Survey 1, Question 1



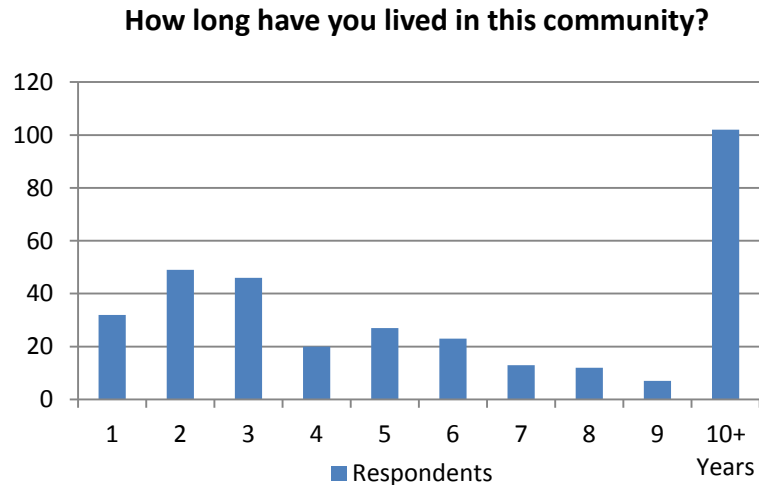
- As predicted, the majority of survey respondents live in Maple Ridge. A total of 366 surveys were collected with 33 unusable surveys for a total of 333 being reported.
- The totals collected from each community were 260 from Maple Ridge, 69 from Pitt Meadows and 4 from Katzie.

Survey 2, Question 1



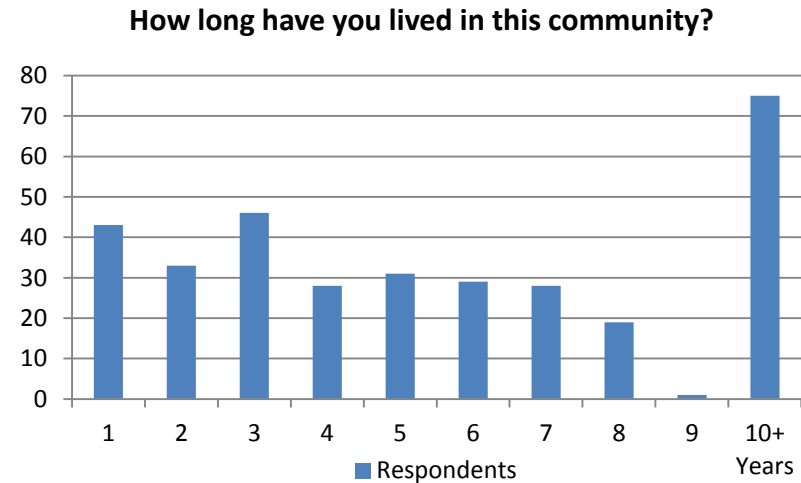
- Again, for Survey 2, the majority of respondents live in Maple Ridge. A total of 169 surveys were collected with 16 unusable surveys for a total of 153 being reported in this report.
- The totals collected from each community were 118 from Maple Ridge, 32 from Pitt Meadows and 3 from Katzie.
- Even though the surveys were conducted 16 months apart, from end dates, and the second survey collection was less than half of the first, the representation from both surveys is surprisingly similar between communities.

Survey 1, Question 2



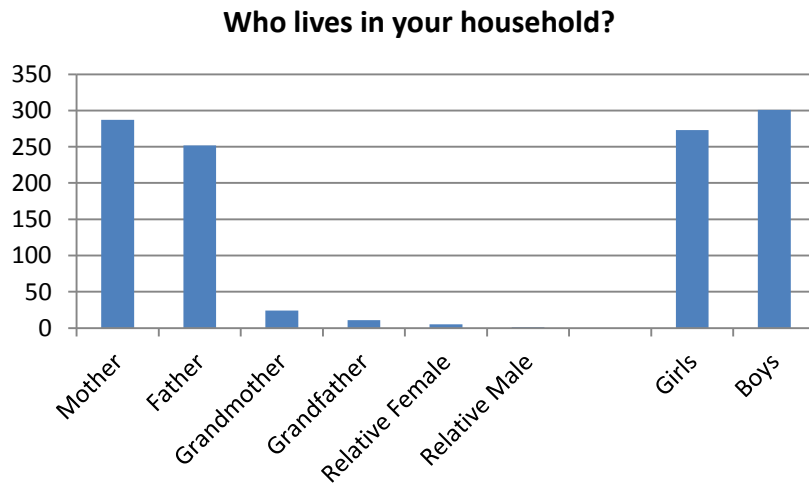
- Ridge Meadows has an overwhelmingly settled population with over 100 of the respondents claiming to have lived in their respective communities for over 10 years with more than half of these families living in Pitt Meadows or Maple Ridge for most of their lives.
- The above chart also shows that many families have recently moved, within the past 3 years to Ridge Meadows.

Survey 2, Question 2



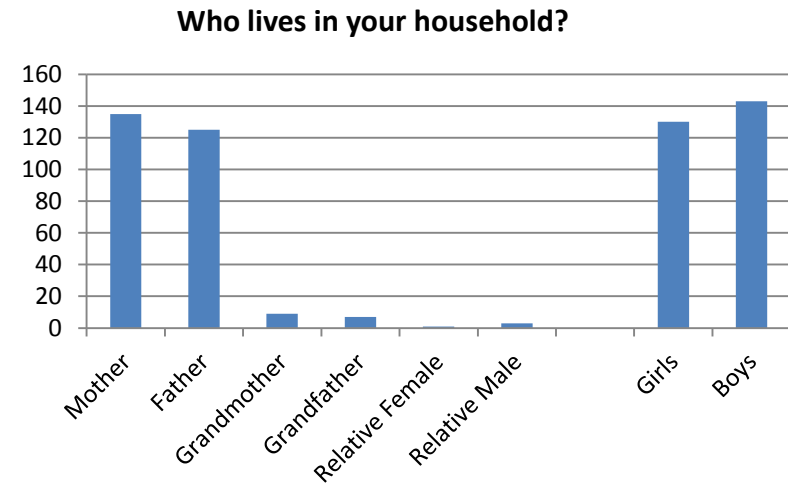
- Even with Survey 2 collection numbers being half the size of the first survey almost half the population of Ridge Meadows, and almost the same amount as Survey 1, has lived in their community for over 10 years with many reporting that they have lived there their entire lives.
- Again, the chart continues to show an increase in residential growth for young families even when compared to the first survey. Consider year 1 of Survey 1 would now be year 2 and so on, in Survey 2.

Survey 1, Question 9



- Twelve percent of respondents that answered this question were single parents.
- Twenty one families had grandparents living with them; however, only 3 families reported raising their grandchildren. This does not correlate well with information collected for Question 8 where 45 families reported that grandparents raising their grandchildren were particularly challenging to their family.
- There are approximately 1.66 children per family.
- Many parents are beginning to raise families in their 30's and 40's. \*About 40% of respondents did not put their age on the survey.

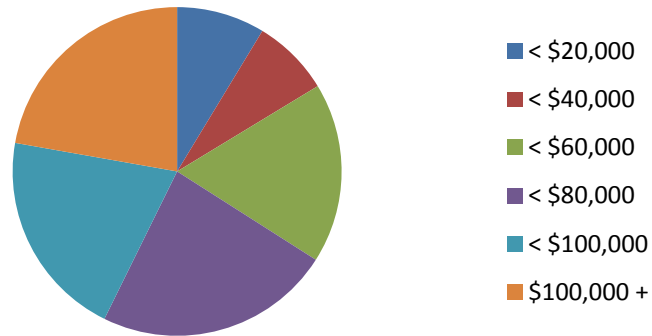
Survey 2, Question 9



- Only 7% of the respondents that answered this question were single parents and only 1 single father family was reported.
- Nine families had grandparents living with them and there were no grandparents reporting they were the caregivers of their children with 8 families reporting in Question 8 that this was an important issue for their family.
- There are approximately 2 children per family.
- Again, many families are starting to raise children in their late 30's and 40's. \*About 25% of respondents did not put their age on the survey.

Survey 1, Question 10

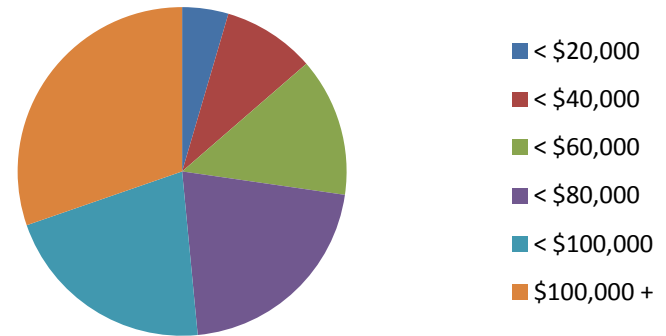
**What is your total combined household income?**



- The majority of wealth is spread amongst the \$80,000 and higher categories with it spread quite evenly amongst these top three income levels.
- About one third of Ridge Meadows families live on incomes less than \$60,000 and the bottom 9% live below an income of \$20,000. With the majority of families in Ridge Meadows being 2 parent/2 children families it is clear to assume that the majority of these families are living below the poverty line.

Survey 2, Question 10

**What is your total combined household income?**

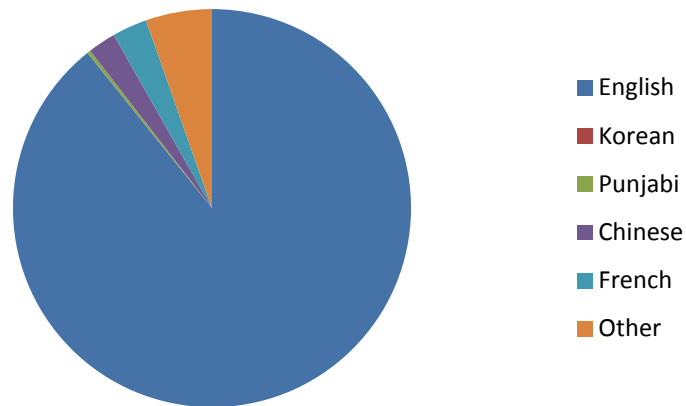


- The combined household income for Survey 2 is very similar to the results of survey 1 with only minor gains in the \$100,000 income level and losses in the \$20,000.
- Although income gradients reflect a relatively affluent community many of the comments in Survey 2 request affordable programming and services for families and young children, including more support for the cost of child care so parents can work; the cost of gas, recreation and sport programs; and balancing work/family and quality of life.



Survey 1, Question 11

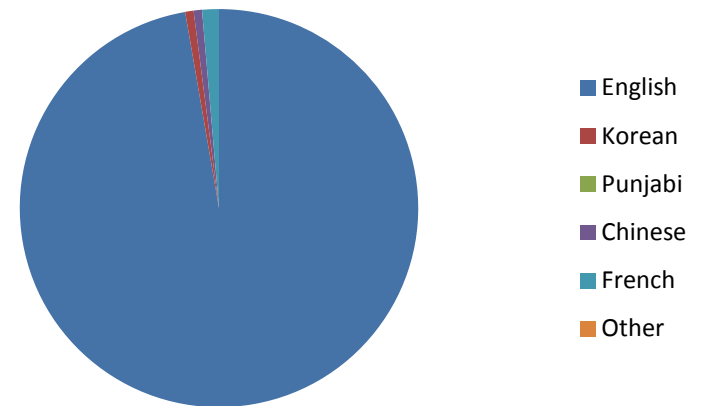
**What language is spoken most at home?**



- Ridge Meadows families are primarily English speaking at home with their youngsters.
- Many families also spoke 2 languages at home with the most common to be Mandarin, Tagalog, Spanish and Dutch.
- There was no mention of any First Nations languages.

Survey 2, Question 11

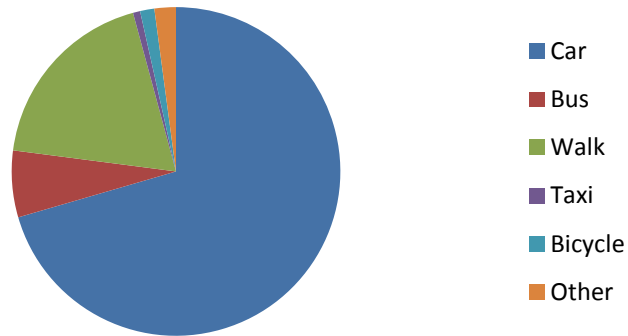
**What language is spoken most at home?**



- Survey 2 also shows the majority of families speaking English as the primary language at home.
- Fewer families this rollout documented a second language spoken at home.
- No mention of any First Nations languages once again.
- There were a couple mentions of German and Japanese also spoken at home.

Survey 1, Question 12

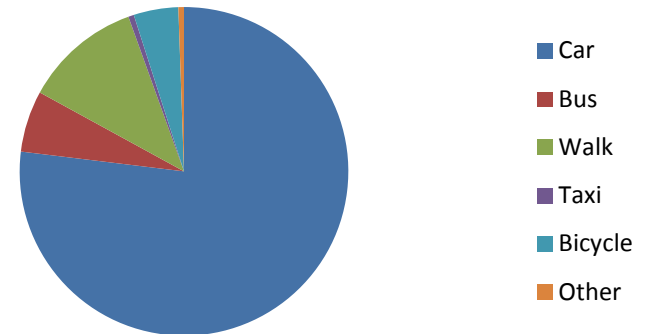
**Which form of transportation is used most by your family?**



- The majority of respondents reported using a car to travel to and from destinations.
- Many also reported that they walked and took public transit to and from activities outside the home.

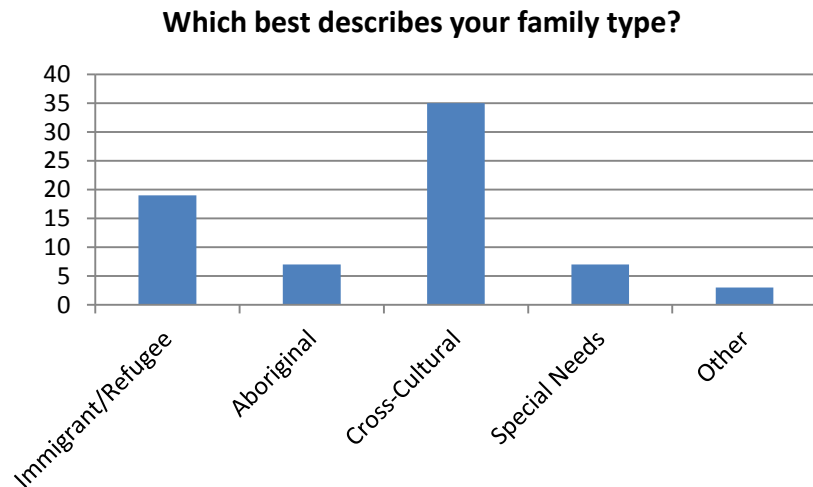
Survey 2, Question 12

**Which form of transportation is used most by your family?**



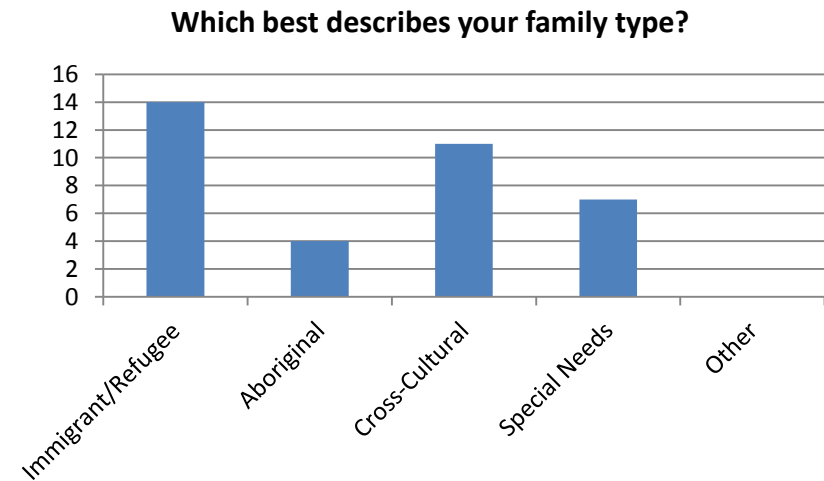
- The above chart is almost identical to Survey 1's chart with few more cars on the road and a few less pedestrians walking.
- Other forms of transportation for both Survey's included motorcycles and car pooling.

Survey 1, Question 13



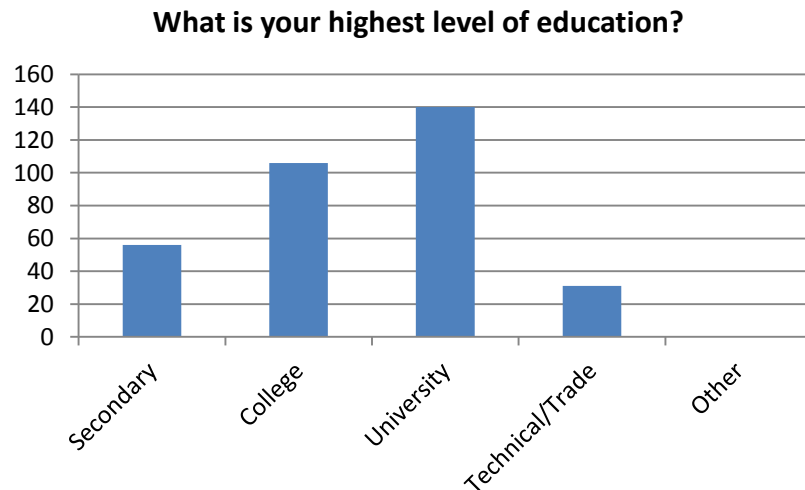
- Only respondents that fit into the above categories answered this question, otherwise they moved to the next question.
- Cross –Cultural families made up 13%, Immigrant/Refugee 7%, Special Needs 3% and Aboriginal Families 2% of the sample population.
- Other included Métis, single parents and work permits.

Survey 2, Question 13



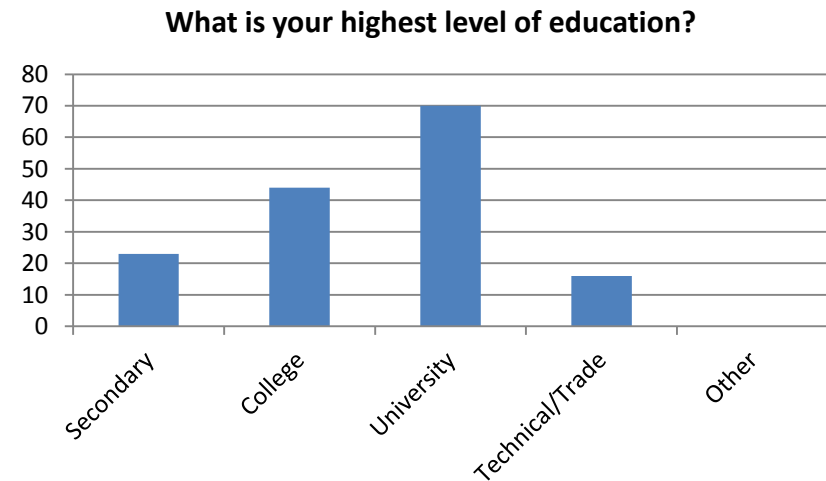
- Immigrant/Refugee families made up 9%, Cross-Cultural 7%, Special Needs 5% and Other 0% of the sample population.

Survey 1, Question 14



- Ridge Meadows is a very well educated community with 42% of the sample population reporting that they have completed university.
- Many dual parent families have dual degrees or have completed college and/or a trade.
- It is reported the higher the level of education a primary caregiver has generally children show better developmental outcomes.

Survey 2, Question 14



- This Survey's chart shows almost identical outcomes from the surveyed population.
- Very few respondents reported not completing high school.

## Concluding Descriptive Remarks

The demographic portion of the Parent Barrier Survey for Ridge Meadows suggests that a large portion of families are headed by two parents – 88% of Survey 1 and 93% of Survey 2. The percentage of lone parent families obtained from BC Stats by School District (Census 2006) states that 22.5% of families are single parents which does not reflect the lowering rate of lone parents (approx. 12% and 7% respectively) as seen in this survey. BC Stats (Census 2006) states that the average number of children per family is 1.8 which correlates well with this reports finding of, on average, 1.8 children per family as well.

Many families are long term residents showing a high degree of sense of belonging to their communities. Residential mobility is increasing yearly over that last four years and is changing the landscape of Ridge Meadows as urban development continues to grow. Unfortunately, this report does not reflect the on and off reserve Aboriginal communities.

Ridge Meadows family's household income is relatively affluent (middle to high income status) with almost two thirds of the surveyed population earning \$80,000 or more. BC Stats (Census 2006) reports that 22% of the poorest households earn less than \$20,000 while Survey 1 showed 9% and Survey 2 showed even less.

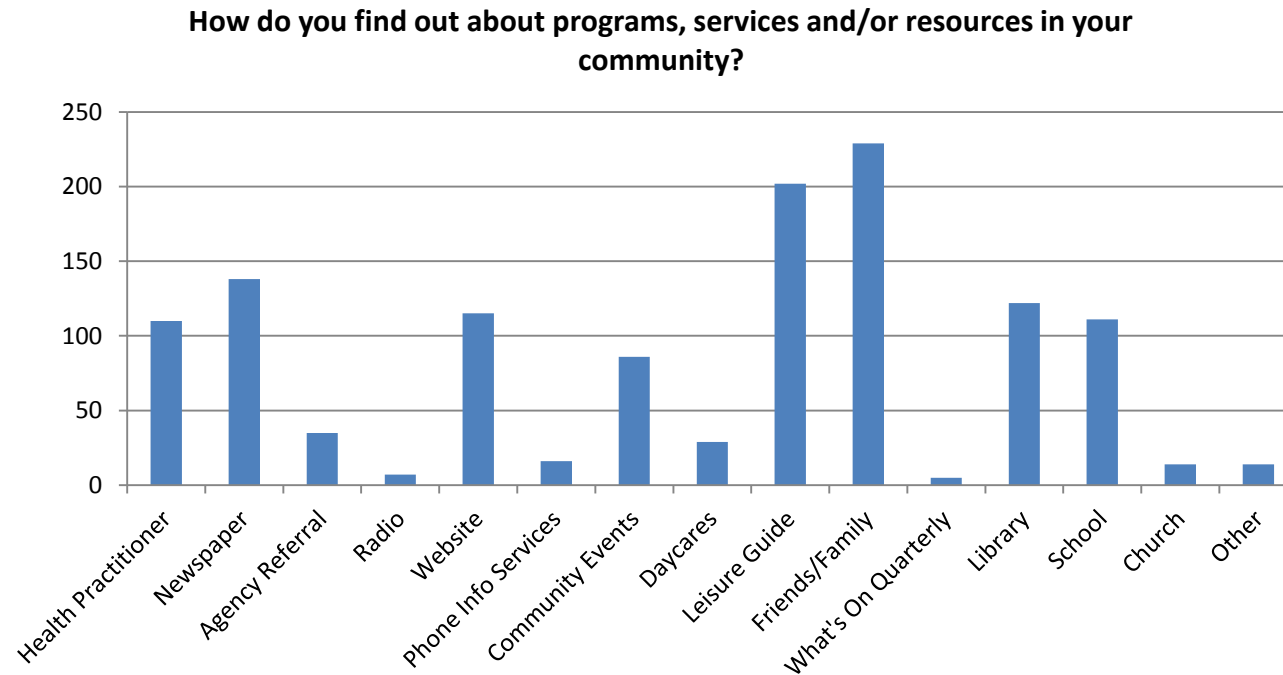
95% of the surveyed population spoke English as their primary language in home. Aboriginal languages were not primary languages in any surveyed home. 'Other' languages spoken in home that were secondary to English were: Mandarin, Tagalog, French, Spanish, German, Japanese, Korean, Dutch, and Polish.

There was a high level of educational attainment within surveyed families with 42% of the sample population having obtained university level education. The 'technical' category reflected certificate courses offered such as a hair dressing certificate or trades.

Over 90% of surveyed family's primary source of transportation is by car. Second choices mentioned were walking and public transportation.

## Section 2: Detailed Results

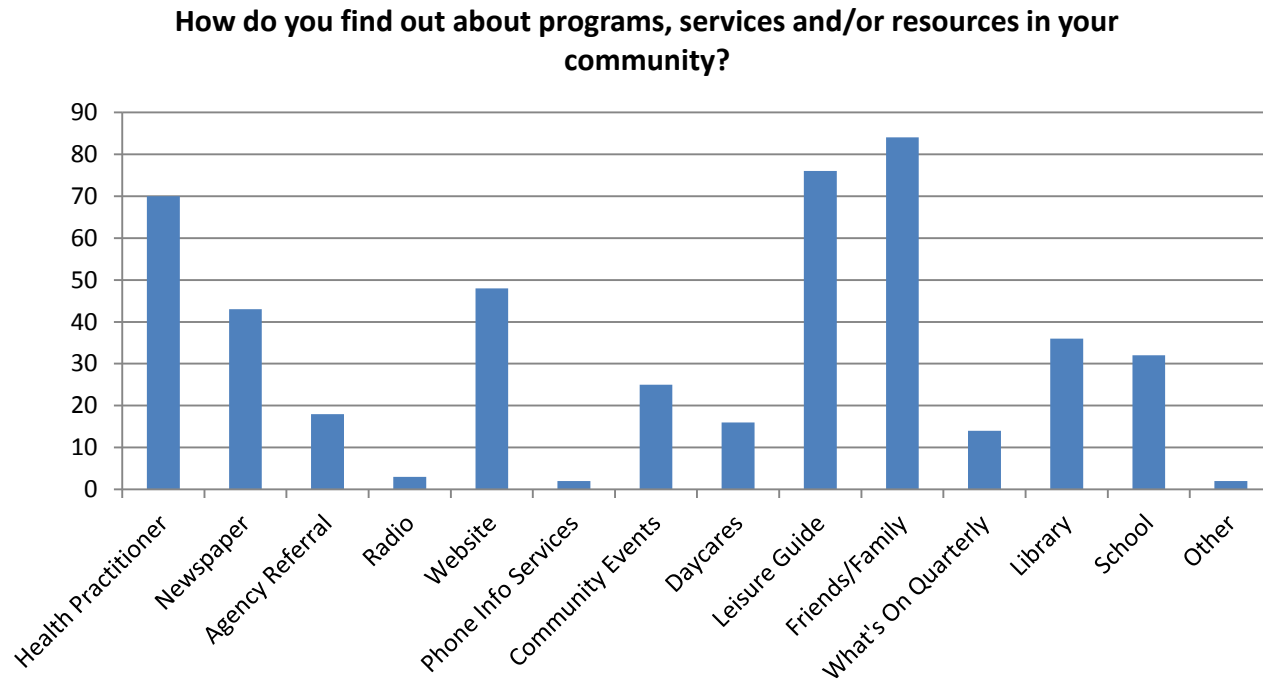
Survey 1, Question 3



Question 3 of Survey 1 shows how families find out about what's going on in their communities. Predominantly friends and family and the Leisure Guide are ways to get the information they desire.

Health, Libraries, schools, newspapers, community events and websites (particularly meetup.com) are other avenues to find services, programs and resources for themselves and their children.

Survey 2, Question 3

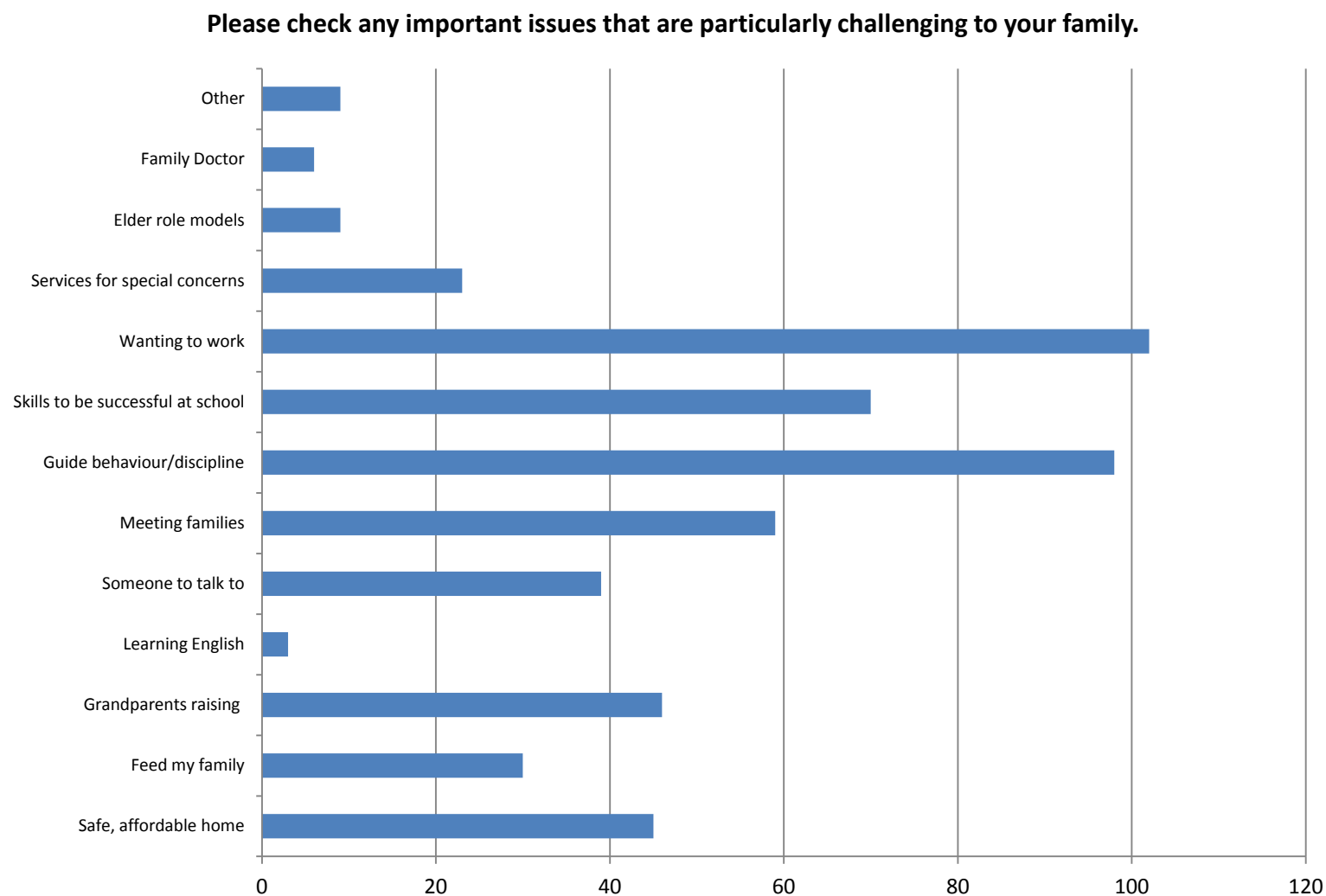


This chart shows very similar results to Survey 1 regarding how families find the information they are looking for.

More families are looking to their Health practioners, such as their doctor, health nurse, etc. for the resources they require.

The RMECDC What's On Quarterly shows that it is beginning to be used more widely.

Survey 1, Question 8





Many of the 'issues' listed above were condensed in order to fit the chart. Please refer to the survey for the complete intention.

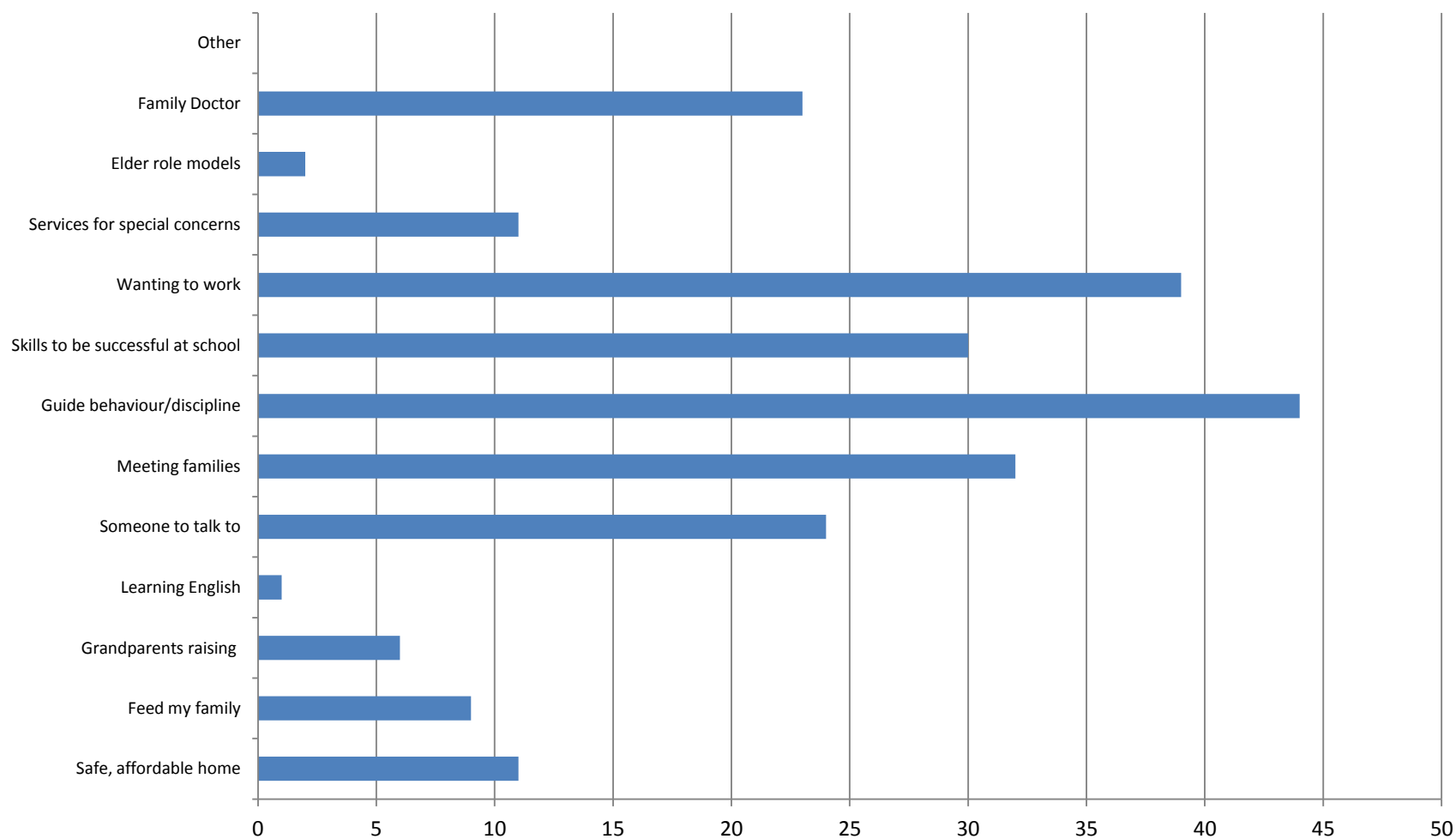
Wanting to work but most of my income would go to paying for child care received the most checks. This was noted many times in the comments section of the survey as well. Families are worried about not having enough income to pay their bills but also state that they would pay most of their wages towards child care which makes it impossible to pay the bills.

Knowing how to guide my child's behaviour and deal with discipline issues was noted with the second highest checks. This issue was taken seriously by the RMECDC committee and was reflected in the Access Funding workshop that we hosted in the spring of 2011.

Grandparents raising grandchildren also received many checks, however; this was not noted in Question 9's profile of caregivers.

Survey 2, Question 8

**Please check any important issues that are particularly challenging to your family.**



The most noted issue that gained a dramatic amount of checks from Survey 1 was finding a family doctor. Helping my child learn the skills to be successful in school and meeting other young children and families also grew importance.

The remaining issues echoed the results of Question 8 in Survey 1.

# Survey 1, Questions 4 & 5

Below is a list of categories of services, programs and/or resources (assets) and possible 'positives' when accessing these assets. Please check beside the any positives you had while accessing these services.

PM Question 4 & 5	Parenting Ed	Support Groups	Family Counselling	Outreach	Health	Literacy	Developmental Intervention / Support	Prenatal	Daycares / Preschools	Food Programs	Family Drop-ins	Respite	Social Housing	Arts	Rec	Postnatal	Birthing	Other
Availability	10	7	2	1	6	4	1	1	14	2	30	1	1	2	17	3	2	
Waitlists	6	5	2	1	2	3	2		10	1	8		1	1	7		1	
Inclusiveness	6	7	2	1	3	3	1		10	2	17		1	1	8	1	1	
Affordable	8	7	2	1	6	8	2	1	10	4	19		1	5	12	4	2	
Advertised Well	1	2		1	1				3		4				8			
Location	4	4	1	1	4	10	2		10	2	21		1	4	13	3	3	
Facilities	4	4	1	1	2	3			6	1	12		1	2	10			
Transportation	2	2				1		1	6	1	12			1	8	2		
Language	5	2	1	1	2	2			7		10		1	1	9	1		
Culturally Approp.	4	2	1	2	2	2			6		9	1	2	1	7			
Approp. Program/Service	6	4	2	1	2	3	2	1	6	1	10		1	2	9	1		
Child minding	2	6	1						8		5		1		4		1	
Safety	8	5	2	1	3	4			9	1	19		1	3	12	1	1	

MR Question 4 & 5	Parenting Ed	Support Groups	Family Counselling	Outreach	Health	Literacy	Developmental Intervention / Support	Prenatal	Daycares / Preschools	Food Programs	Family Drop-ins	Respite	Social Housing	Arts	Rec	Postnatal	Birthing	Other
Availability	29	20	3	2	17	43	10	9	43	3	78	1	2	15	55	7	3	
Waitlists	9	8	1	2	9	10	2	2	10		25		1	4	17	3	2	
Inclusiveness	15	11	2	2	8	20	2	10	9	3	43	1	2	10	24	6	2	1
Affordable	25	24	3	1	18	33	9	9	26	5	75	1	2	15	45	10	6	
Advertised Well	6	7		2	7	16	2	3	9		17	1		6	23	5		
Location	25	19	2	4	16	35	9	11	39	6	65	2	1	15	51	10	3	
Facilities	14	8	1	2	7	15	4	4	11	1	36		1	5	23	4	3	
Transportation	11	8	1	3	6	19	1	3	12	5	32		2	7	26	4	3	
Language	12	9	2	2	5	18	6	6	9	1	35		1	7	19	7	2	
Culturally Approp.	8	6		2	3	11	1		7	1	26		1	7	15	2	1	
Approp. Program/Service	9	4	2	3	14	12	7	4	17	2	31		1	9	33	3	2	
Child minding	17	10	1	1	4	6	4	2	10	2	13				10	1		1
Safety	17	14	1	4	14	25	6	5	23	4	49		1	11	34	8	4	1
Other		1													1			1

Above is a table of the services, programs and resources that many families we surveyed accessed. We asked surveyed respondents to identify positives when accessing the broad scope services, programs and resources above. These questions were very difficult for the majority of respondents to answer, especially with their little ones needing their attention while filling out the survey. Due to the vast amount of information collected it was imperative that I take the top three of their choices as many ticked all of them.

Due to the geographical distance from assets that Pitt Meadows encounters I thought that the information would be best useful to keep the two communities responses separate for the first Survey.

StrongStart, Family Place, Swimming, Health Nurses, The Family Education and Support Centre, IDP, SCD, The Libraries (Storytime) and Mother Goose programs were mentioned many times as is reflected in the numbers above.

Many stay at home caregivers commented on the programs, services and resources above.

## Survey 2, Questions 4 & 5

Below is a list of categories of services, programs and/or resources (assets) and possible 'positives' when accessing these assets. Please check beside the any positives you had while accessing these services.

Question 4 & 5	Parenting Ed	Support Groups	Family Counselling	Outreach	Health	Literacy	Developmental Intervention / Support	Prenatal	Daycares / Preschools	Food Programs	Family Drop-ins	Respite	Social Housing	Arts	Rec	Postnatal	Birthing	Other
Availability	23	8	4	2	16	22	9	11	15		20	2	1	9	20	10	3	1
Waitlists	6	1	2	2	4	5	1	2	3		5	1		5	9	5	1	1
Inclusiveness	10	4		2	4	10	2	7	4		12	2		5	10	4	4	
Affordable	15	3		2	10	17	2	6	7	1	15	2		11	28	9	5	
Advertised Well	6			1	3	7		2	2		5			5	8	4	2	
Location	12	5	1	3	11	13	6	10	11	1	16	2		11	23	11	6	1
Facilities	7	1	1	2	8	6	2	2	3		5	1		6	11	9	5	
Transportation	4	1	1	2	5	5	2	1	2		4			4	8	6	3	
Language	6	1	1	2	7	7	2	1	1		7			4	8	7	4	
Culturally Appro.	2	1	1	1	4	5			2		3			3	7	6	2	
Appropriate Program/Service	8	2	2	2	10	8	4	3	3		9			4	12	9	5	1
Child minding	9	2	1	1	2	7	1	1	2		6			3	9	4	3	1
Safety	9	3	2	3	9	7	3	1	3		12	1		5	9	7	2	1
Other																		

Survey 2 also paid high accolades to many of the service providers and resources available to them. The responses collected from respondents were much fewer for the second survey and therefore I felt it would be best to combine them. Again, in concert with Survey 1, I took the top 3 picks from each survey as many checked all of the choices.

Many surveyed also commented on the behavioural workshop that we conducted, through Access Funding, last spring and suggested they would like to see more developmental workshops for parents with young children.

Survey 1, Questions 6 & 7 Below is a list of categories of services, programs and/or resources (assets) and possible ‘challenges’ when accessing these assets . Please check beside any challenges you had while accessing these services.

PM Question 6 & 7	Parenting Ed	Support Groups	Family Counselling	Outreach	Health	Literacy	Developmental Intervention / Support	Prenatal	Daycares / Preschools	Food Programs	Family Drop-ins	Respite	Social Housing	Arts	Rec	Postnatal
Not Enough Time	2	3	1			3	1		1	1			1	1	4	
Availability	2	1	1	2	1	3		2	3	2	4	1	1		5	1
Waitlists too long			1		1		3		2	1		1		1	4	1
Inclusiveness	1	1														
Not Affordable								2	6	1	1	1		1	4	
Did not know about it	1		1			1			1		2				2	
Location	1				1			1	1		1					
Facilities																
Transportation	2				1					1				1	1	
Language																
Not Culturally Approp.																
Approp program or service	1					1		1							2	
Childminding	1													1	1	
Safety		1														
Other																

MR Question 6 & 7	Parenting Ed	Support Groups	Family Counselling	Outreach	Health	Literacy	Developmental Intervention / Support	Prenatal	Daycares / Preschools	Food Programs	Family Drop-ins	Respite	Social Housing	Arts	Rec	Postnatal	Birthing	Other
Not Enough Time	10	5	5	2	3	8	1	3	5	4	5	1	2	8	9	2	1	
Availability	11	33	5	1	8	7	3	4	8	3	10	1		13	24	1	2	
Waitlists too long	3	3	7	1	3		3		13	1	4	1	4	2	16	1	1	
Inclusiveness	2										1		1	3	4			
Not Affordable	6	1	1	1	5	4	1	3	15	3	5	4	3	18	22	1	1	
Did not know about it	6	5	6	1	2	5	4	2	4	3	6	1	3	6	6	1	2	
Location					3	1			6		3			3	3		1	
Facilities							1		1				1		2			
Transportation	1				1						1	1			1			
Language				1					1									
Not Culturally Approp.																1		
Approp program or service	2	1			3	1	2	1	1		3			1	1			
Childminding	7	2	2		2	1			1		3			3	11	1		
Safety									1		1							
Other																	1	

The above table reflects the opposite to the chart for questions 4 and 5. This table is showing the challenges that families have encountered while trying to access services, programs and/or resources.

Again, due to the vast amount of information collected it was imperative that I take the top three of their choices as many ticked all of them. Due to the geographical distance from assets that Pitt Meadows encounters I thought that the information would be best useful to keep the two communities responses separate for the first Survey.

This information could prove very useful for agencies, organizations, and such, to use in their planning in order to break down barriers and gaps in services that many of these families have faced over time.

‘Not Enough Time’ is reflective of families that face time deficits and generally have fulltime jobs with young children and are simply exhausted at the end of the day. Many of these families expressed that they desire to attend programs but their physical limitations and work schedules prevent them from doing so. Also, working parents explained that they are in need of programs and services that fit their schedule or the many ages of their children. It is clear in many cases that families are not aware of available subsidies to them and therefore are not able to take advantage of lowering the cost out of pocket for programming. Many families also don’t know where to find resources that could enable them to take advantage of all the Ridge Meadows has to offer its families.



### Survey 2, Questions 6 & 7

Below is a list of categories of services, programs and/or resources (assets) and possible 'challenges' when accessing these assets. Please check beside any challenges you had while accessing these services.

Question 6 & 7	Parenting Ed	Support Groups	Family Counselling	Outreach	Health	Literacy	Developmental Intervention / Support	Prenatal	Daycares / Preschools	Food Programs	Family Drop-ins	Respite	Social Housing	Arts	Rec	Postnatal	Birthing	Other
Not Enough Time	8	3	1		1	1	1	1	1			1			1	2		
Availability	2	2	1		1	2	2	1	2	1	2			3	5	2	1	2
Waitlists too long		1	3				3		3			2	1		1			
Inclusiveness								1		1		1	1					
Not Affordable	1		4					1	8		1			3	4	1	1	
Did not know about it	2	2	1	1		2				4	1	2		1	1	1		
Location								1										
Approp program or service																1		
Childminding	4	1						1							1			

The above table reflects the opposite to the chart for questions 4 and 5 of Survey 2. This table is showing the challenges that families have encountered while trying to access services, programs and/or resources.

Although there are not as many challenges listed in this table as in the previous survey they are still clustered in much the same format.

Availability, waitlists and affordability seem to take precedence over many other issues and tend to reflect many families busy schedules and overloaded budgets.

As a Committee that serves families with young children and dedicated to the well-being and development of children there are several pieces that we should consider:

- Take the issues that families are facing and use this information to guide us in future workshops and forums.
- Take note that both Parent Barrier survey results conducted 14 months apart from each other are basically speaking the same language.
- Help families to get the information they need by making sure that our resources are at the agencies and organizations that they utilize most and have positive feedback about
- Understand that families are living in a time deficit and require agencies and organizations to use the information they have given us to plan for easier access to programs and services based on their availability and not ours.
- Understand that families are facing grave financial issues even though their income status is predominantly high. Many caregivers can't justify working and leaving their children in care if they have nothing financially to contribute to other than child care fees.
- Don't forget that there are many families still living under \$20,000 per annum and are having difficulties. Are they the families that are also having a hard time feeding their children and finding a safe affordable place to live? Or do these families manifest from a combination of all income and educational sectors.