



Parent Engagement and Support

FY2021-2022 Strategy Summary

Prepared by Social Policy Research Associates | October 2022

The programs funded under OFCY's Parent Engagement and Support (PES) strategy are designed to strengthen the capacity of parents and caregivers to support the healthy development of their children. Parents and caregivers with young children (birth to age 8) received linguistically and culturally relevant family supports and participated in family engagement activities that promoted attachment and positive parent-child interactions. To summarize achievements and progress to date, this report draws on the following:

- A focus group with program staff from Safe Passages' Baby Learning Communities Collaborative (BLCCP) and the Alameda County Health Care Services (ACHCS) Oakland WIC Father Cafes
- A focus group with Arabic-speaking mothers who participated in the Safe Passages' BLCCP
- Attendance records, parent/caregiver surveys, and quarterly submitted program reports

The photo on the cover page is courtesy of the City of Oakland Parks Recreation & Youth Development' Community Adventure Pre-K Playgroups (CAPP).

Strategy Results



**618 Children &
1,244 Adults**

participated in programming



28,191 Hours

of service provided



10 Programs

supported families with young children



\$1,082,343

granted to programs



87% Families

Agreed that they were connected with other programs and resources that help their family



85% Families

agreed that the program helped them to respond effectively when their child is upset

Funded Programs

<p>Abriendo Puertas/ Opening Doors Parent Education - Family Paths, Inc.</p> <p>Building Strong Children in LGBTQ Families - Our Family Coalition</p> <p>Community Adventure Pre-K Playgroups (CAPP) - City of Oakland Parks Recreation & Youth Development</p>	<p>Fr. Charles D. Burns, SVD Pre-Pre-School Program - Prescott-Joseph Center for Community Enhancement, Inc.</p> <p>Kindergarten Readiness- Summer PreK - Oakland Unified School District</p> <p>Oakland Promise: Brilliant Baby - Oakland Promise</p>	<p>Oakland WIC Father Cafes - Alameda County Health Care Services Agency (ACHCS)</p> <p>Parent & Tot Initiative (PTI) - Refugee & Immigrant Transitions</p> <p>Project Pride - LifeLong Medical Care</p> <p>Safe Passages Baby Learning Communities Collaborative - Safe Passages</p>
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“We learned how to interact with our children. We learned the importance of spending quality time with our children. And also, this program taught us better parenting skills. I really became a much better mom since I joined this program. And it helped, not only me, but also my children, us as a family. Not just the little children or the youngest one, but also even the older ones. “

-Parent Participant, Safe Passages’ BLCCP

Strategy Results

Beginning in the 2019-2022 funding cycle, OFCY adopted a Results Based Accountability (RBA) framework to assess its role in contributing toward city-wide goals. The RBA model is a comprehensive approach for assessing the quantity of services provided by programs, the quality of those services, and the effect of those services on the lives of children, youth, and families. It does this by addressing **three guiding questions: (1) How much did we do? (2) How well did we do it? (3) Is anyone better off?** Results for the strategy are displayed in the table on the following page.

FY21-22 Results Based Accountability Results

How much did we do?

Number of Programs Funded	10
Number of Children Served	618
Number of Adults Served	1,244
Total Hours of Service Provided	28,191
Average Hours of Service per Child Participant	17
Average Hours of Service per Adult Participant	14

How well did we do it?

Enrollment: Average progress toward projected number of youth served ¹	202%
Average progress toward projected number of adults served	93%
Total Service Hours: Average progress toward projected total hours of service	108%
Average Hours of Service: Progress towards projected average hours of service per participant	99%
Supportive Environment: Parents and caregivers who say that program staff make them feel comfortable and supported	95%
Diversity and Inclusion: Program staff work well with families from different backgrounds	94%

Is Anyone Better Off?

Knowledge of Child Development: Parents and caregivers who say the program helped them to identify their child's needs	89%
Connections to Resources: Parents and caregivers who report that staff refer them to other programs and resources that can help their family	87%
Skills to Manage Behavior: Parents and caregivers who say the program helped them to respond effectively when their child is upset	85%

The remainder of this report includes the following sections aligned with this RBA framework:

1. Overview of Programs and Participants
2. How much did the programs provide?
3. How well did programs do it?
4. Is anyone better off as a result of the strategy's work?

¹ At the start of the fiscal year, programs estimate their annual enrollment and the total number of hours of service they will provide. Progress is calculated as the actual enrollment divided by the projected enrollment.

“So, the majority of our focus...is really to help our fathers in the development of zero to five of their children. So, making sure that they understand developmental milestones. Those that are coming out of jail or prison, making sure that they understand baby/child attachment and ... helping them understand and giving them ways that they can start to reinitiate ... their relationship with their children is one of the biggest things.”

–Staff, ACHCS’s Oakland WIC Father Cafes

Programs and Participants

PES programs offered a wide range of services, including parenting workshops, support groups, play groups, case management, and coaching.

During FY2021-2022, **618 children and 1,244 adults participated in Parent Engagement and Support (PES) programs.** These programs offered an array of services to meet the unique needs of families and their young children, including trainings and workshops, support groups, playgroups, case management, mental health supports, coaching, basic needs assistance, wellness checks, referrals, and more.

PES programs continued to adapt to the changing landscape during the pandemic, many offering a combination of virtual and in-person services. Virtual programming was delivered via phone, online, text, and video calls. Programs found that virtual services were more effective and accessible to some families. For example, Oakland Promise: Brilliant Baby conducted virtual financial coaching sessions with parents and caregivers; this format removed logistical barriers for families resulting in a higher participation rate. Refugee & Immigrant Transitions’ Parent & Tot Initiative (PTI) staff reported that families found online learning to be both appealing and more accessible as it reduced transportation and child-care barriers. Our Family Coalition’s Building Strong Children in LGBTQ Families found it easier to partner with other local organizations through virtual platforms and easier to access trainings for staff. Safe Passages’ BLCCP also saw

Thanks to programs' efforts to safely roll out health protocols, both families and program staff welcomed in-person programming as it became a safe, low-risk option.

ACHCS's Oakland WIC Father Cafes offered one-on-one consultation and case management as a work around for participants who were restricted by the virtual format.

PES programs conducted extensive and targeted outreach to recruit families, often leveraging relationships with local partners.

high attendance at virtual events like their family engagement celebrations, which brought together up to 300 children and adults from West Oakland to far East Oakland.

In-person programming included case management, playgroups, and events. Safe Passages' BLCCP staff reported that both families and staff were grateful for the opportunity to be in-person again, noting that families shared that in-person events were needed after a year of restricted social interaction, and staff expressed joy from being able to connect face-to-face with children and families again.

On the other hand, some programs had the added challenge of having to adhere to their parent agency's health and safety policies. For example, Alameda County Health Care Services Agency required that ACHCS's Oakland WIC Father Cafes hold all programming virtually. This created challenges for participants who did not have the necessary technology or did not have the privacy needed to share openly about sensitive topics. Conversations at Father Cafes can touch on masculinity, divorce, and relationships, which fathers may not feel comfortable discussing in the presence of other household members. In response, the program offered one-on-one consultation and case management with participants who needed to discuss sensitive subjects.

To recruit and stay connected with local families, community programs needed to conduct extensive and targeted outreach during a regular year. Programs recruited through in-person and virtual events, phone calls, emails, text messages, flyers, social media, and partnerships with other local community-based and nonprofit organizations, as well as schools.

Program Spotlight

To inform this report, SPR conducted a focus group with staff from two programs:

Alameda County Health Care Services (ACHCS) Oakland WIC Father Cafes serves fathers of children 0-5 who are enrolled in the Alameda County Women, Infants, and Children Supplemental Nutrition program (WIC). The program offers facilitated peer-to-peer support groups, focusing on developing parenting skills and knowledge to support their child's development and the co-parenting relationship with their partners. The program promotes fatherhood responsibility, resulting in healthy development for children and improved kindergarten readiness.

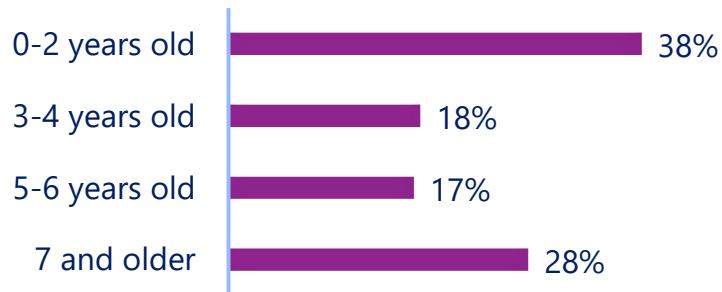
Safe Passages Baby Learning Communities Collaborative Program (BLCCP) serves four high-need communities in Oakland: Havenscourt, Stonehurst, West Oakland, Fruitvale. BLCCP supports families and children 0-8 years old by providing culturally and linguistically responsive programs and services. They offer infant playgroups, Pre-K readiness playgroups, parent workshops, enrichment activities, mental health resources, special needs case management, and essential needs support. SPR also conducted a focus group with Arabic-speaking mothers who participated in BLCCP.

Parents/caregivers represented about two-thirds of all participants in the PES strategy.

In line with the focus on strengthening the capacity of families to support the healthy development of their young children, this strategy served parents and caregivers, and their children ages 0-8. Parents/caregivers represented two-thirds of all participants (67%). As shown in the chart on the following page, children ages 0 to 4 represented over 50% of child participants served by this strategy.

Age of Participants

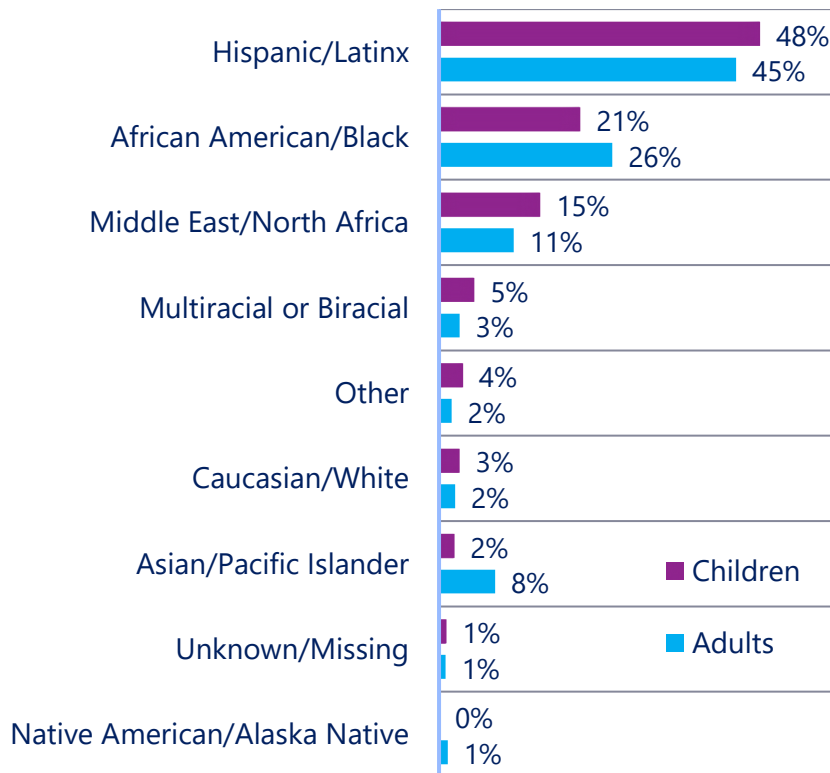
Child



Children ages 0 to 4 made up over 50% of the children served by PES programs.

As shown in the graph below, 69% of children identified as Hispanic/Latinx or African American/Black. Because 15% of children identified as Middle Eastern/North African, which is not a census-designated group, it is difficult to make a comparison to the demographics of the city.

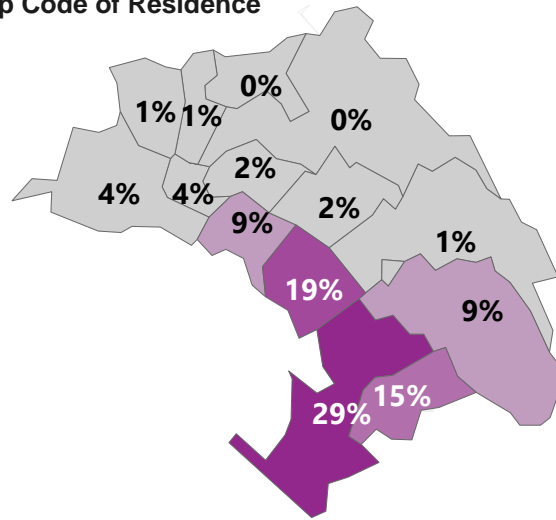
Race/Ethnicity



Participants were most likely to identify as Latinx.

As illustrated below, most families lived in zip codes located along the 880 corridor and in West Oakland that experience the highest levels of community stress in the city. Among other stressors, these neighborhoods have a particularly high percentage of unemployment, unaffordable housing, and unsheltered homelessness.

Zip Code of Residence

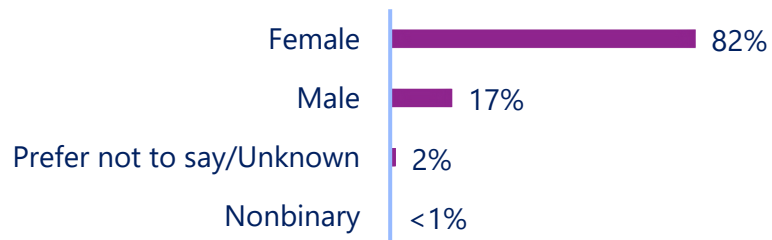


94621: Webster Tract, Coliseum	29%
94601: Fruitvale	19%
94603: Sobrante Park, Elmhurst	15%
94606: Highland Park, East Lake	9%
94605: Eastmont, Havenscourt	9%

Table includes zip codes where at least 5% of participants live.

As seen in previous years, adult participating in PES programs overwhelmingly identified as female.

Gender of Adult Participants



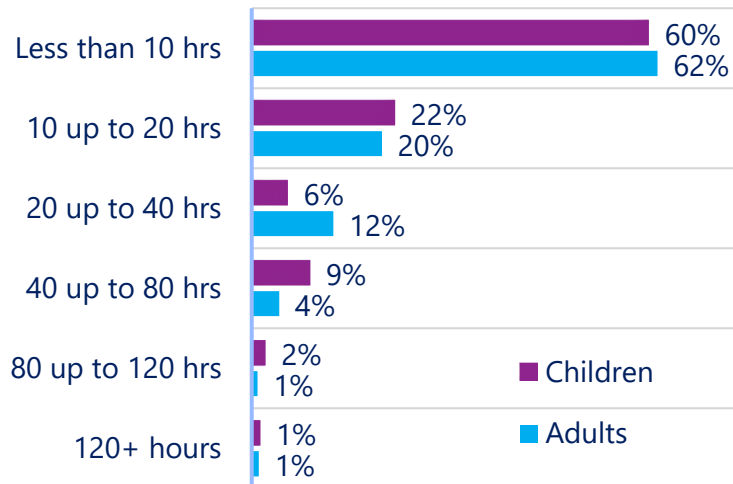
Over 80% of adult participants identified as female.

How Much Did Programs Do?

Programs provided 28,191 hours of service. To meet the diverse needs of families, programs offer a range of service models that offer opportunities for varied levels of engagement. For example, some programs offered ongoing playgroups that families could attend all year, while others facilitated limited workshop and/or playgroup series with six to eight sessions. Programs that provided case management also tailored the amount of support provided to meet the needs of the family. As shown below, the amount of time children and families engaged in Parent Support and Engagement services varied significantly.

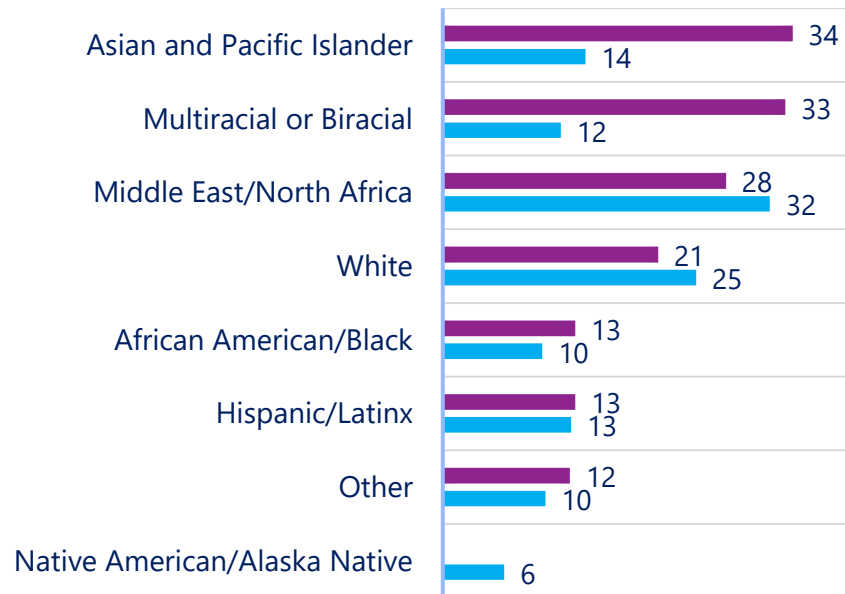
Programs offered a range of service models that provided opportunities for varied levels of engagement.

Hours of Attendance



Children and parents spent a similar amount of time in programming. Parents spent an average of 17 hours in programming, compared to 14 hours for children.

Average Hours of Child Participation by Race/Ethnicity

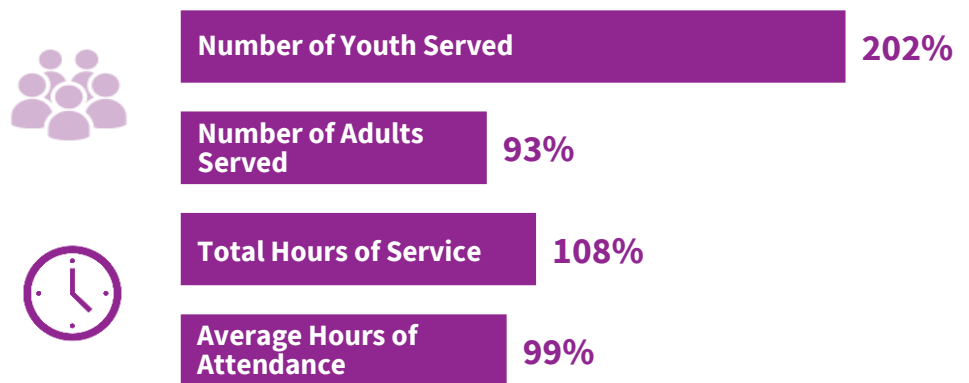


The level of participation varied by race/ethnicity but there was no discernable pattern between child participants and adult participants.

How Well Did Programs Do It?

OFCY tracks a series of indicators to assess how well grantees in each strategy have implemented their programming. The first four indicators include progress toward projected program enrollment (children and adults), total hours of service, and average hours of service per participant. As shown, on average programs met or came close to meeting their targets.

Program Performance: Progress Towards Projections



In addition to these performance measures, the Parent Education and Support strategy has indicators based on parent/caregiver surveys that assess key dimensions of program quality. As demonstrated below, the 383 parents and caregivers that completed a survey gave high ratings in these areas, with more than nine out of ten adult participants reporting that program staff made them feel comfortable and supported and that the staff work well with families of different backgrounds.

Program Quality: Parent/Caregiver Survey Responses (n=383)

Over 90% of participants who completed a survey agreed with questions related to having supportive environment and supporting diversity and inclusion.

Supportive Environment

95%

Parents and caregivers who say that program staff make them feel comfortable and supported

Diversity and Inclusion

94%

Program staff work well with families from different backgrounds

To ensure families were successful in getting necessary supports, PES programs followed up with local partners, public agency staff, and the families.

According to focus groups and grantee reports, PES programs created a supportive environment for families by centering their needs, taking the time necessary to build trust, and creating a judgement-free space that encouraged openness. Support groups were spaces for parents and caregivers to deepen their understanding of parenting and child development, ask questions, and connect with one another. The community aspect of these groups was vital to helping families feel less alone and share their experiences.

PES programming is focused on supporting families' parenting goals and ensuring that families have a support system behind them. Safe Passages' BLCCP staff had many conversations with families to identify their goals and needs before providing tailored services and referrals. Both BLCCP and

PES programs helped families navigate complicated systems to get the support they needed.

ACHCS's Oakland WIC Father Cafes staff shared the importance of following up with families. ACHCS's Oakland WIC Father Cafes staff ensured they had strong relationships with local partners so they could do the necessary follow up to ensure services and supports were delivered. BLCCP staff helped families navigate complicated systems to access resources, such as applying for Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) cards and troubleshooting with families as challenges often arise with the public agencies. Because staff walked through entire processes with families, families knew they had a support system behind them.

“The system is broken. The system is not looking out for our particular clients. So, we have to show them that we actually do care. We're going to work for you. We're going to go to battle for you. We're going to advocate for you. We're going to do all these different things to show them that we care and then actually do it. We can speak a good game, but if we never put any feet behind our words, then we're just like everybody else.”

-Staff, ACHCS's Oakland WIC Father Cafes



Photo courtesy of the City of Oakland Parks Recreation & Youth Development' Community Adventure Pre-K Playgroups (CAPP)

Is Anyone Better Off?

To assess if Parent Engagement and Support participants are better off because of their involvement in programming, OFCY uses parent/caregiver surveys to assess knowledge of child development and skills to manage child behavior.

Family Outcomes: Parent/Caregiver Survey Results (n=383)

Knowledge of Child Development

89%

Parents and caregivers who say the program helped them to identify their child’s needs

Connections to Resources

87%

Parents/caregivers who report that staff refer them to programs and resources that can help their family

Skills to Manage Behavior

85%

Parents and caregivers who say the program helped them to respond effectively when their child is upset

Close to 90% of surveyed participants agreed that their program helped them identify their child’s needs.

“When I’m feeling sad or angry, I usually don’t know what to do. I end up ignoring my feelings and try to forget about them. Coming to group has helped me direct some of those feelings towards something positive; I can bring up what I’m going through in class, and [staff] will listen to me and help me see things from a different angle. This is something I feel I cannot do with my wife or my kids because I don’t want to burden them.”

- Participant, ACHCS’s Oakland WIC Father Cafes

In addition to these primary indicators, participant survey data, staff reports, and program and participant focus groups tell a more comprehensive story about the ways that PES programs strengthened families' understanding of their children's development, helped families' reach their parenting goals and be more responsive to their children's needs, and delivered vital services to families, including pandemic-related support.

Knowledge and Skills to Support Child Development

PES programs provide group and one-on-one supports to families as they strengthen their child development knowledge and skills.

Playgroups, support groups, workshops, and community events helped parents and caregivers strengthen their parenting skills and deepen their knowledge of healthy child development. For example, ACHCS's Oakland WIC Father Cafes hosted a Boot Camp for New Dads where expecting fathers and father figures learned about caring for a new baby, child safety, working as a parent team, and paternal postpartum depression. They also used child development questionnaires to help fathers understand their child's developmental milestones and progress. Project Pride provided families with case management services for specific parenting needs and supported families as they learned to bond with their new babies. And, at Safe Passages BLCCP, developmental specialists and family clinicians worked with families to help them advocate for their children in the school system and assisted them in developing their skills to communicate and support their children at home. PES programs used varying formats and approaches to support families and the healthy development of their children.

87% of survey respondents agreed: Because of this program, I have a better understanding of how my child is growing and developing.

Increased Confidence in Managing Children's Behavior

PES programs also helped parents and caregivers respond to their children's needs and enjoy the experience of raising

87% of survey respondents agreed: Because of this program, I have a better understanding of what behavior is typical at my child's age.

children. For example, Safe Passages' BLCCP offered coaching to families. As families deepened their knowledge and tried new parenting strategies, staff followed-up with them and continued to provide guidance. BLCCP participants shared that they learned about listening to children, supporting their mental health during the pandemic, and understanding and responding effectively to their behavior. Parents expressed gratitude for the strategies that staff shared and noted that the strategies resulted in positive impacts on their whole family.

Parents shared that they learned about how self-care is an important part of being a responsive parent and caregiver.

Participants shared that they also learned the importance of their own self-care and how it impacts their parenting. In fact, they reported that they had more positive interactions with their children after taking time for themselves, as exemplified in the quote below.

“Participating in this program did help me as a mom to be more attentive to my children, and to let them talk. I learned how to be a better listener to my little children. Something I haven't always done in the past. But that program taught me, ‘no, you better give time to your kids to talk. You better wait, listen to them, listen to their needs.’”

-Parent Participant, Safe Passages' BLCCP

Access to Resources

PES programs provide targeted resources to families, scaling up their supports as families' needs changed. This was especially vital during the pandemic and as the economy shifted. Families' requests for resources increased as inflation rose, gas prices surged, and the housing crisis continued to grow in Oakland. Safe Passages' BLCCP participants noted that their families experienced financial hardship due to lost or reduced wages, thus the program's support was critical to their livelihood. In response PES programs tailored the type

and intensity of services based on the needs of the community, offering the following supports:

- **Basic needs** - delivering food to quarantined families, offering rental and utilities assistance, setting up food pantries, and supplying diapers and wipes.
- **COVID-19** - providing at-home testing, scheduling vaccine appointments, navigating test sites, reviewing COVID-19 protocols, and supplying PPE.
- **Navigation** - assisting families to receive the child care tax credit, emergency housing, EBT cards, social security cards, as well as resolving issues with public benefits, immigration, health care, housing, transportation, etc.

Families noted that without assistance and interpretation from PES staff they would not have access to vital resources.

At Safe Passages' BLCCP, one staff member was able to schedule vaccination appointments for over 400 people in the West Oakland community. BLCCP participants expressed gratitude and affection for staff and their constant support noting that they would not have been able to access resources without their support. Additionally, recognizing that the needs of families are constantly changing, both BLCCP and ACHCS's Oakland WIC Father Cafes conducted focus groups to ensure that their services remained accessible and relevant to the families and fathers they serve.

“Basically, I want to thank [a BLCCP staff member] for helping out quite a bit. ...Really what comes to my mind right now is the fact that I was able to get my EBT card. [She] did assist. She did interpret quite a bit. I was able to get my card. I don't speak English that well. So, getting my EBT card was very, very important for me personally.”

-Parent Participant, Safe Passages' BLCCP

Conclusion

To support families with young children, PES programs provided trainings and workshops, support groups, playgroups, case management, mental health supports, coaching, basic needs assistance, wellness checks, and referrals. In recognition of changing public health protocols, the safety of families and staff, and the needs of families, programs offered their programming both virtually and in person in FY21-22. Parent/caregiver surveys and focus group with parent participants demonstrated that these services promoted families' understanding of child development, supported their ability to respond effectively to their children and attend to their own self-care, helped families navigate complex public systems, and connected them to resources to support their basic needs.