

OberlinKids Market Research Analysis

Prepared By:

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Analysis Overview

The purpose of this research project was to support the local non-profit organization, OberlinKids, in its efforts to strengthen early child development and community engagement in the Oberlin community. Our group was tasked with conducting survey research to better understand the needs and desires of both families already involved with OberlinKids, and those who are less familiar with the organization. Our research sought to provide actionable insights that would help OberlinKids expand its reach, identify barriers to participation, and refine programming to meet the needs of local families.

To achieve this, we designed and implemented two brief intercept surveys that focused on OberlinKids highest priority market interests. These surveys were then taken to a number of events either run by or relating to OberlinKids, and the Oberlin Student Marketing Team used them to conduct brief interviews with local parents to gauge their wants and needs. A QR code flyer for the intercept survey was also created and posted in numerous locations throughout the town to broaden the reach of our data collection efforts.

The results of the surveys we conducted led to important key findings that will be discussed at length in the report. Our findings mainly concern the types of events and services parents wish were more accessible, the most significant barriers to attendance at events, and the most common places for parents to get information about the happening of these events and services. Other findings briefly detail family structure demographics and familiarity with the OberlinKids organization.

Based on the analysis of the data we collected for Oberlin Kids, we have several key recommendations for Oberlin kids which will be discussed at length in the report below.

Our recommendations focus on ways of making Oberlin Kids more accessible to its community, suggestions of event ideas to prioritize, and marketing/communication recommendations. Our most important and actionable suggestions include getting an answering machine and contact form for the website, having more events that center around arts and crafts and socializing, and focusing on social media to improve outreach and engagement.

RFP Summary and Projected Goals

OberlinKids is a local non-profit organization powered by the United Way of Greater Lorain County. The organization is seeking insights into community engagement, awareness, and needs related to programming. There are three main questions OberlinKids is looking to answer are:

- How familiar are Oberlin families with OberlinKids and its services?
- What additional services do parents in Oberlin want for their kids?
- What barriers prevent parents from accessing OberlinKids resources?
- What steps can be taken to boost community engagement?

With these questions in mind, the Oberlin Student Marketing Team decided that survey research would be the most appropriate approach. Survey research was chosen because it is a cost and time-effective data collection method that allows us to collect both qualitative and quantitative data directly from OberlinKids' population of interest, Oberlin families.

Methodology

Although initially our group considered a series of focus groups with parents who participated in Oberlin Kids programs, we ultimately decided to move in the direction of survey collection as our primary methodology. While ultimately getting specific parents to interact with each other and give their unbiased opinion in a moderated environment would have been beneficial, it would not have been particularly feasible in the timeframe needed to complete this project. After deciding to pursue the survey angle, we first developed a short, intercept survey to be used at in-person events, such as Oberlin Kids Winter Photo Event, Walking in a Winter Oberlin, and Oberlin Kids in Motion, to primarily collect data from OberlinKids' existing base. The survey included questions such as "Do you live in Oberlin? Do you have children aged 0-5?" and "What types of services/events do you wish were more accessible to your children?". From these events, we collected a total of 47 responses (n=47) by approaching parents with physical versions of this survey and either asking them to fill it out or simply recording their responses.

After reviewing the responses from the initial survey and realizing we could use more specified data but did not have the time to collect it in-person, we turned to a virtual option. Because of this, we turned to a second intercept survey, which we then created into a QR code and placed around popular locations in the town of Oberlin. These places included Mickey Mart, Oberlin Public Library, Tappan Square, Slow Train, low-income housing (138 S Main Street & 95 E Vine St.), Martin Luther King Memorial Park, Goodwill, Dollar Tree, Dollar General, CVS, Doobies, Aladdins, Gibsons, Blue Rooster, Carlyles, Yings, and Apollo. In addition to simply placing posters in these locations, several group members went to smaller events not associated with OberlinKids to collect survey data in attempts to reach a wider audience, including Kendal's

Early Learning Center and the Oberlin Public Library story time hours. From this survey, we totaled a few more responses (n=5).

Additionally, our group considered the idea of running a longer form survey to get more advanced information from the existing parent base. Through our communication with OberlinKids, they informed us that they had run their own longer form survey previously, to which we encouraged them to rerun the same survey after a few minor adjustments. Their parent base and contact list is much wider than our own, and utilizing that to their advantage in the future when running this survey would be to their benefit.

Findings

In regards to the longer questions, we have collected some key findings, which will be split into data from all surveyed parents and specifically from parents with children aged 0-5.

What types of services and events do you wish were most accessible to your children?

In terms of desired services and events, all surveyed parents showed interest in two main services, an organized play group (mentioned by 11/53 (20.8%)) and creative events (mentioned by 11/53 (20.8%)), which included arts and crafts (7), musical events (2), and performances (2). When the data was limited only to parents of children aged 0-5, these percentages were slightly higher with 10/40 (25%) of parents mentioning interest in an organized play group and 11/40 (27.5%) mentioning interest in creative events. It is important to note that arts and crafts events may have been more heavily preferred as a result of the first data collection location being at an art event (Winter Fun Photo Event). “I wish there was more variety in the arts services available like kids theater stuff and music that would give the kids shows and concerts or open houses to be a part of,” said one Oberlin parent with children aged 4 and 7.

In terms of play groups, while one parent highlighted the community classroom as a “great underutilized resource,” another mentioned that “it is inconsistent when people are actually in the community classroom to play. I’ve had a friend go a few times and be sad nobody was in there for her child to play with. An organized play group could help remedy this.” In terms of play group structures, there are many options, but one Oberlin parent of children aged 6 & 8 mentioned “My son is in Lego Club and I like that they set up the first hour to be more structured and then have free play. They have something like kickball for the first hour and then free play for the last hour which could be a good structure for a play group.”

Though these two categories of play group and art events were the most substantial, parents also mentioned educational services (mentioned by 7/53 (13/2%) of all parents surveyed, but only 3/40 (7.5%) of parents with children 0-5), water events (mentioned by 5/53 (9.4%) of all parents surveyed and 4/40 (10%) of parents with children 0-5), and physical activities (mentioned by 6/53 (11.3%) of all parents surveyed, but only 2/40 (5%) of parents with children 0-5) 17% of parents surveyed mentioned a specific timing preference, which will be analyzed in the following section, in combination with relevant timing barriers. See Appendix C Tables C1 and C2 for a full list of the frequencies of all services and events mentioned by parents.

Which of the following barriers is most significant for you when trying to attend events for your children?

In terms of barriers for parents, timing of events was by far the most frequently mentioned (14/28 (50%) of all parents and 11/22 (50%) of parents with children aged 0-5), followed by no barriers (8/28 (28.6%) of all parents and 6/22 (33%) of parents with children aged 0-5), with transportation/location (3/28) and safety concerns (2/28) only having a few responses each.

Timing was also occasionally mentioned by parents in the section about services and events that they wished were more accessible. Specifically, nap time was mentioned a few times by parents as a difficult period of time to attend events (4/28 parents, all with children aged 0-5). Parents also showed a desire for afterschool activities (4/28 parents, all with children aged 0-5) Furthermore, a couple of parents mentioned a desire for more things to do in the winter, such as physical activities or longer evening hours for the Community Classroom (though we are uncertain whether this currently is available or not). See Table C3 for a full list of all the timing preferences with relevant frequencies.

It is interesting to note that though cost of events was mentioned a couple times in relation to other questions, such as when one parent expressed an interest in “free language learning,” cost was never listed explicitly as a barrier. This was true even in the online survey where parents were asked to choose which of the following barriers was the most significant for them— time of event, cost of event, location of event, length of event, or other. Only 6 people filled out the survey, so no real assumptions can be made based on those specific results, but it is interesting to note that cost was never chosen. This information may show that parents in Oberlin and the broader Oberlin area do not feel overly burdened by the current cost of events for their children, but is worth collecting more data on.

Where do you get information about events/services for your children?

By far, the two most commonly mentioned ways that parents got information about events/services for their children was through email (mentioned by 17/53 (32.5%) of all parents and 15/40 (37.5%) of parents of children 0-5), and social media (mentioned by 17/53 (32.5%) of all parents and 13/40 (32.5%) of parents with children aged 0-5). Facebook was specifically mentioned most often among social media platforms (13/53 (24.5%) of all parents and 9/40 (22.5%) of parents with children with parents aged 0-5).

Many parents were not asked this question in the intercept survey, for the sake of creating a shorter survey. Therefore, there were 17/53 non-answers, leaving only minimal, but still worth considering, percentages of parents getting information from anywhere besides email or Facebook, such as the school, website, or via flyers. See Table C4 for a full list of all frequencies and percentages of preferred ways of receiving information.

Where do you like to go with your family often?

This question highlights what parents already enjoy doing with their children, providing

more ideas to complement the information we have about parents' preferred types of events. This question was only asked within our second round of intercept surveys and therefore has a smaller sample than the question about preferred types of events. By far, the largest category of events mentioned were parks/playgrounds/nature (mentioned by 25/29 (86%) of all parents and 19/20 (95%) of parents with children aged 0-5). This category included responses such as playground, park, or various other nature activities, such as going to the Reservoir, Lorain duck pond, or hiking. The outdoorsy events were combined with playground events, since most parents who mentioned them also mentioned playgrounds/parks as well. If a parent said multiple outdoorsy activities in one response, it was included as only one mention. Parents also mentioned frequently going with their family to the library (mentioned by 12/29 (41%) of all parents, but 11/20 (55%) of parents with children aged 0-5), the zoo (mentioned by 6/29 (20.6%) of all parents and 4/20 (20%) of parents with children aged 0-5), and the Science Center/museums (mentioned by 7/29 (24%) of all parents and 4/20 (20%) of parents with children aged 0-5). See Table C5 for the frequencies of events mentioned among all parents and the frequencies of events mentioned among parents 0-5.

The following briefly details the key findings derived from the analysis of the shorter survey questions, which will be split into data from all surveyed parents and specifically from parents with children aged 0-5.

Do you live in Oberlin?

Most parents surveyed lived in Oberlin (67.9%), while those who did not (32.1%) (See Figure A1), lived largely in the surrounding area, like Elyria (23.5%) and Lorain (11.8%) (See Figure A2). Among those surveyed with children aged 0-5, we found that most families resided

in Oberlin (67.5%) (See Figure A1), while those who did not, again, largely lived in the surrounding areas, such as Elyria (15.4%) and Westlake (15.4%) (See Figure A2).

It is important to note that many parents who reported not living in Oberlin may work in Oberlin or otherwise have access to Oberlin events and services.

Number of kids?

Most parents surveyed reported having one child (41.5%), followed closely by families with two children (32.1%). We also received responses from parents having three, four, or five children, although those who fell into these categories were significantly fewer. Results for those with children aged 0-5 followed similar patterns, with most reporting having one (40%) or two (37.5%) children, while fewer reported having three, four, or five (See Figure A3).

Have you ever been to an OberlinKids event?

Most parents reported having attended an OberlinKids event previously (60.4%), while others, especially those who had never heard of OberlinKids before, reported never having attended an event (32.1%) (See Figure B1). Results largely replicated for those surveyed with only children aged 0-5, with 60.4% having attended an OberlinKids event previously, while 30% had not (see Figure B1).

Are you aware of any formal/informal parent groups in Oberlin?

An overwhelming majority of parents of those who responded to this question said that they were unaware of any formal or informal parent groups in Oberlin (32.1%), while only 9.4% mentioned knowing of any formal/informal parent groups in Oberlin. Of those who were aware of groups, they were specifically aware of “Parent cafes” (40%), “Movement works” (20%), “Pradnya (informal)” (20%), “OberlinKids Parent Groups” (20%), “Child resource center” (20%), “College faculty groups (informal)” (20%), and “Daycare groups (informal)” (20%).

Note: If a parent mentioned multiple groups, they were recorded as separate responses. When analyzing the data of those only with children aged 0-5, similar results were recorded (see Figure B4). See Table C6 for a full list of all frequencies and percentages of formal and informal parent groups mentioned.

Would you want to be contacted about events or services for children aged 0-5 in Oberlin?

Twelve parents surveyed provided contact information including email and/or phone number to be notified regarding events or services for children aged 0-5 in Oberlin. See Table C7 for a full list contacts who wish to be contacted.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the findings from the two short, intercept surveys conducted both in-person and virtually, common themes and conclusions were drawn. Timing of events seemed to be the most significant barrier for parents attending Oberlin Kids' events, with several respondents hoping that events were held later in the evenings. Some examples of dissatisfaction included wishing that the recreational center and community classroom were open during the evenings. Nap time also proved to be a significant barrier for several parents, stating that they could not attend events between 12-2pm. Many parents agreed that morning or evening events work the best for them and their children, leading us to recommend that OberlinKids schedules more small programs during these times, especially during the winter months, as several parents responded that these months lead their children to stay indoors more and be less engaged with their friends and community. After school programs were additionally mentioned several times by parents (four times to be exact).

Due to all of these common themes and conclusions from our survey research, we recommend the following to help OberlinKids better serve their current population and further advance their scope with a new target audience. Firstly, the OberlinKids office needs to get an answering machine. Without one, if an attendant or office employee is nowhere near the phone or the office is closed for the day, a prospective parent has no way of leaving a message. This severely limits the potential outreach of OberlinKids, as well as not having a contact form on the official OberlinKids website. Email and Facebook are efficient for marketing purposes to the existing population, but the goal for current marketing should be to extend your base. Generally, a better and more efficient use of communication technology and the internet would do nothing but benefit OberlinKids and their target population. As far as events are concerned, we

recommend more arts and music based events, as several parents indicated that the field was noticeably lacking. Overall, while marketing methods have been sufficient to manage the events OberlinKids currently offers, if the outreach wishes to extend any further, we recommend the aforementioned adjustments.

Appendices

Appendix A (Demographics)

Figure A1. Do you live in Oberlin? (All respondents, n = 53; Parents with children 0-5, n = 40)

Do you live in Oberlin? (All respondents, n = 53) Do you live in Oberlin? (Parents with children 0-5, n = 40)

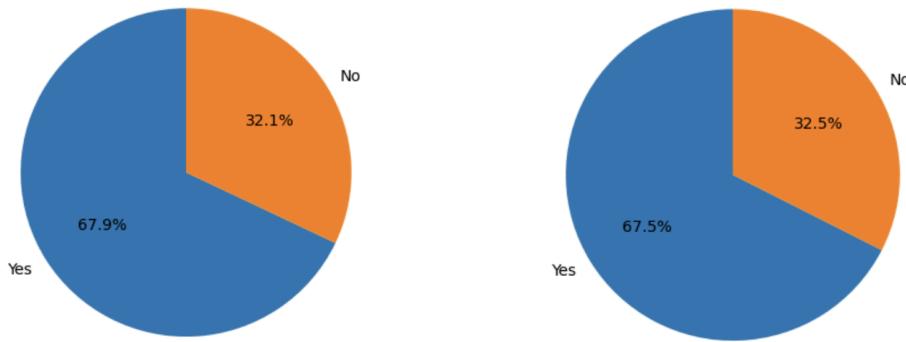


Figure A2. Location of Respondents Living Outside Oberlin (All respondents, n = 17; Parents with children 0-5, n = 13)

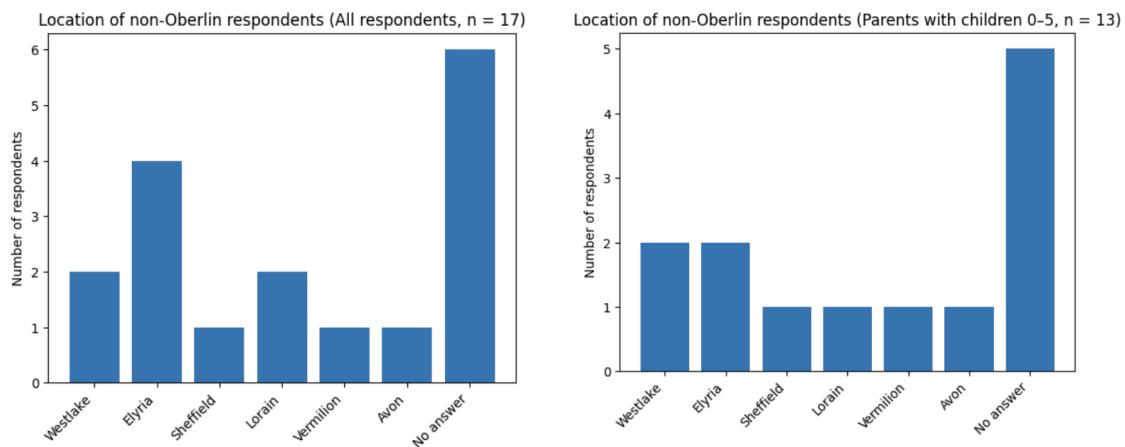
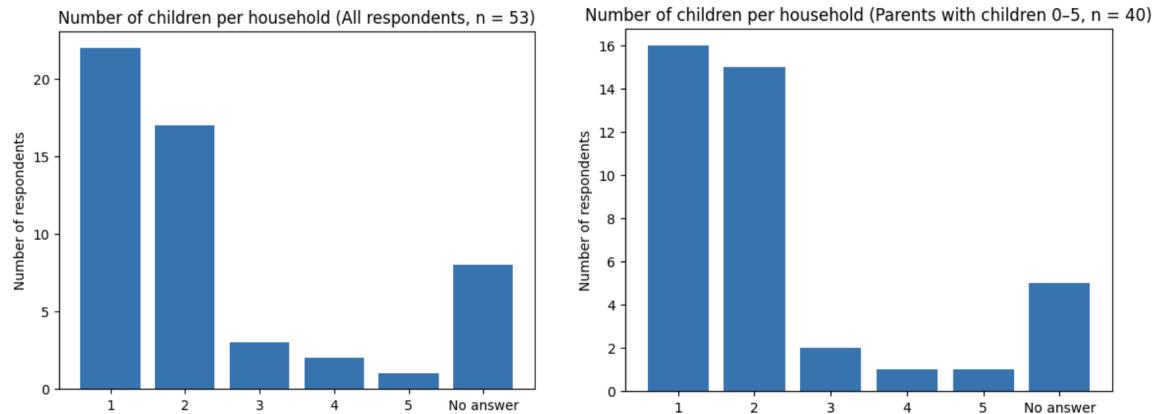


Figure A3. Number of Children Per Household (All respondents, n = 53; Parents with children 0-5, n = 40)



Appendix B (Intercept Survey Results)

Figure B1. Have you ever been to an Oberlin Kids event? (All respondents, n = 53; Parents with children 0-5, n = 40)

Have you ever been to an Oberlin Kids event? (All respondents, n = 53) Have you ever been to an Oberlin Kids event? (Parents with children 0-5, n = 40)



Figure B2. Barriers to Attending Children's Events (All respondents, n = 28; Parents with children 0-5, n = 22)

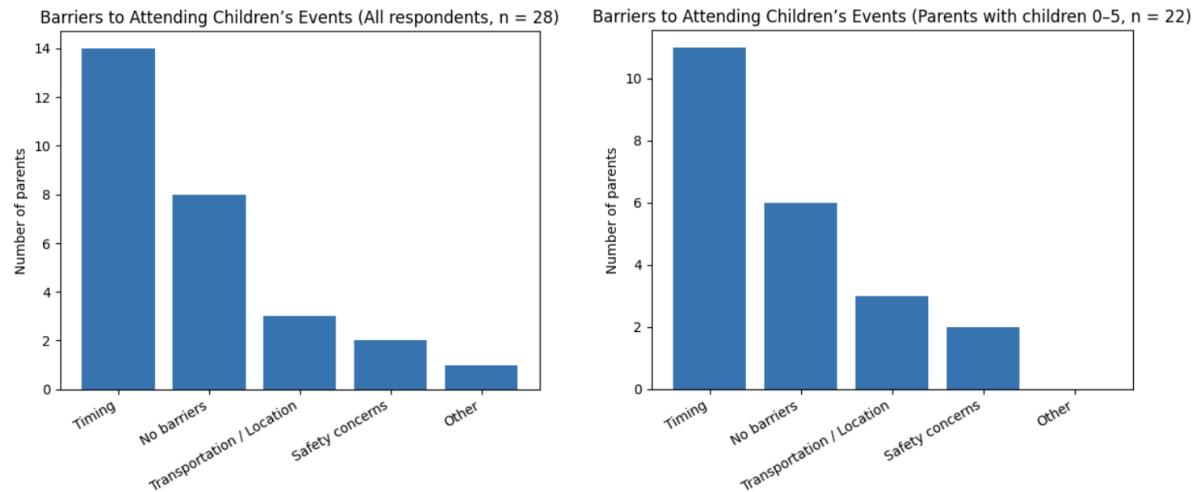


Figure B3. Preferred Ways of Receiving Information (All respondents, n = 53; Parents with children 0-5, n = 40)

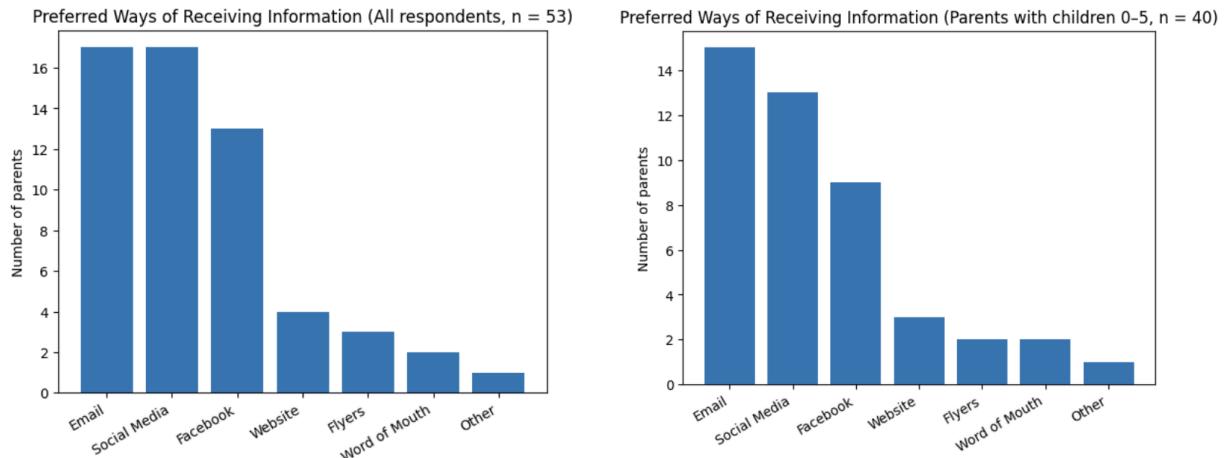
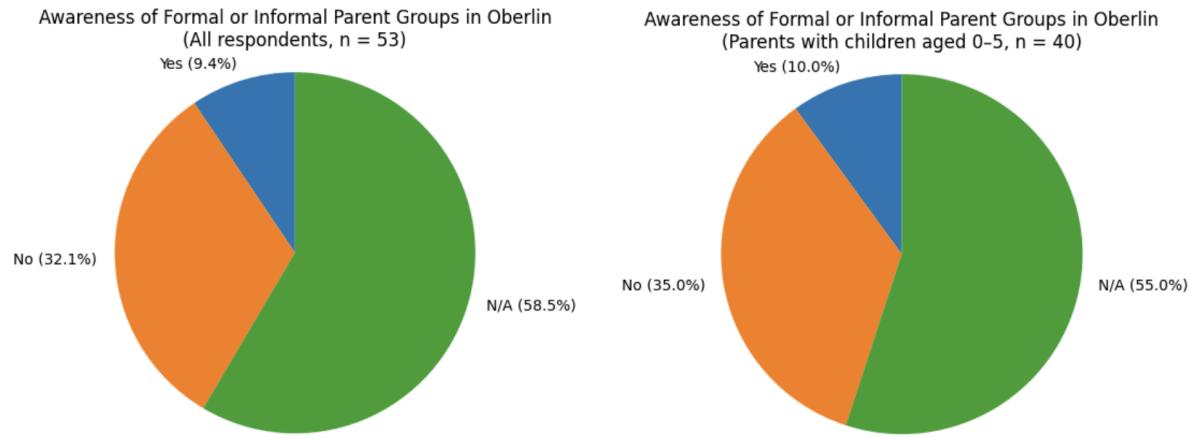


Figure B4. Have you heard of any formal/informal parent groups in Oberlin? (All respondents, n = 53; Parents with children 0-5, n = 40)



Appendix C (Frequency Tables)

Table C1. Desired Services and Events (All respondents, n = 53)

Service/Event Category	Frequency	Percentage
Play, Social & Group Interaction	11	20.8%
Arts & Crafts, Creative Expression	11	20.8%
Specific Timing Preferences	9	17.0%
Educational Services	7	13.2%
Physical Activities (Sports, KidsinMotion)	6	11.3%
Water Events	5	9.4%
Satisfied with Current Events	4	7.5%
N/A	4	7.5%
Photos	3	5.7%
Kids Events	3	5.7%
Hands-on Activities	2	3.8%

Outliers (Less than one mention)	12	22.6%
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Table C2. Desired Services and Events (Parents with children 0-5, n = 40)

Service/Event Category	Frequency	Percentage
Arts & Crafts, Creative Expression	11	27.5%
Play, Social & Group Interaction	10	25.0%
Specific Timing Preferences	7	17.5%
Water Events	4	10.0%
Satisfied with Current Events	3	7.5%
Educational Services	3	7.5%
N/A	3	7.5%
Kids Events	3	7.5%
Physical Activities (Sports, KidsinMotion)	2	5.0%
Photos	2	5.0%
Hands-on Activities	2	5.0%

Outliers (Less than one mention)	10	25.0%
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Table C3. Barriers to Attending Children's Events (All respondents, n = 28; Parents with children 0-5, n = 22)

Barrier	All Respondents (n = 28)	Parents with Children 0-5 (n = 22)
Timing of Events	14 (50.0%)	11 (50.0%)
No Barriers	8 (28.6%)	6 (27.3%)
Transportation/Location	3 (10.7%)	3 (13.6%)
Safety Concerns	2 (7.1%)	2 (9.1%)
Other	1 (3.6%)	0 (0.0%)

Table C4. Preferred Ways of Receiving Information About Children's Events (All respondents, n = 53; parents with children aged 0-5, n = 40)

Information Source	All Respondents (n = 53)	Parents with Children 0-5 (n = 40)
Email	17 (32.5%)	15 (37.5%)
Social Media (Any Platform)	17 (32.5%)	13 (32.5%)
Facebook	13 (32.5%)	9 (22.5%)
School/Organization Website	4 (7.5%)	3 (7.5%)
Flyers/Posters	3 (5.7%)	2 (5.0%)
Word of Mouth	2 (3.8%)	2 (5.0%)
Other	1 (1.9%)	1 (2.5%)
No Answer	17 (32.1%)	12 (30.0%)

Table C5. Places Families Go Together Outside the Home (All respondents, n = 29; Parents with children 0-5, n = 20)

Location Category	All Respondents (n = 29)	Parents with Children 0-5 (n = 20)
Parks/Playgrounds/Nature	25 (86.0%)	19 (95.0%)
Library	12 (41.0%)	11 (55.0%)
Science Center/Museums	7 (24.0%)	4 (20.0%)
Zoo	6 (20.6%)	4 (20.0%)

Table C6. Formal and Informal Parent Groups Mentioned by Respondents (All respondents, n = 5; Parents with children 0-5, n = 4)

Parent Group Mentioned	All Respondents (n = 5)	Parents with Children 0-5 (n = 4)
Parent Cafes	2 (40.0%)	2 (50.0%)
Movement Works	1 (20.0%)	1 (25.0%)
Pradnya (Informal)	1 (20.0%)	1 (25.0%)
OberlinKids Parent Groups	1 (20.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Child Resource Center	1 (20.0%)	1 (25.0%)
College Faculty Groups (Informal)	1 (20.0%)	1 (25.0%)
Daycare Groups (Informal)	1 (20.0%)	1 (25.0%)

Table C7. Parents Who Opted to Be Contacted About Events or Services (Parents with children 0-5, n = 9; Parents without children 0-5, n = 4)

Contact Information	From Oberlin	Children Aged 0-5
mh.jenkins@gmail.com	Yes	No

livingdeadgirl5791@gmail.com	No	Yes
louiscunningham@gmail.com	Yes	Yes
Rahfalcon23@yahoo.com	No	Yes
Thom Julian, tjulian@oberlin.edu	No	Yes
216-327-9533	Yes	Yes
216-278-4762	Yes	Yes
Holly Irvin, 607-425-2824	Yes	Yes
s.keller007@yahoo.com	No (Works In Oberlin)	No
440-258-8171	No	No Answer
Mia Mcfarland, 440-213-1462	No (Children Attends School In Oberlin)	Yes
440-541-4291	No	Yes