



# PRESCHOOL PROGRAM FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES (PPCD): PARENT, STAFF, AND COMMUNITY SURVEY RESULTS

November 2010

## Introduction

The Preschool Program for Children with Disabilities (PPCD) provides special education services, in English and in Spanish, for children between the ages of 3 and 5 with developmental delays or other disabilities. The program is implemented at 56 elementary campuses throughout the Austin Independent School District (AISD). The goal of the program is to provide early intervention in a variety of community and school environments to ensure success in the general education classroom. Each child who meets eligibility for PPCD services has an Admission, Review, and Dismissal (ARD) committee-developed Individualized Education Plan (IEP).

In October 2010, parents of students referred to AISD's PPCD program were surveyed regarding their experiences with the referral and evaluation processes. Surveys were returned to students' PPCD teachers. By early November, 163 paper surveys, including 116 (71%) in English and 47 (29%) in Spanish, were returned.

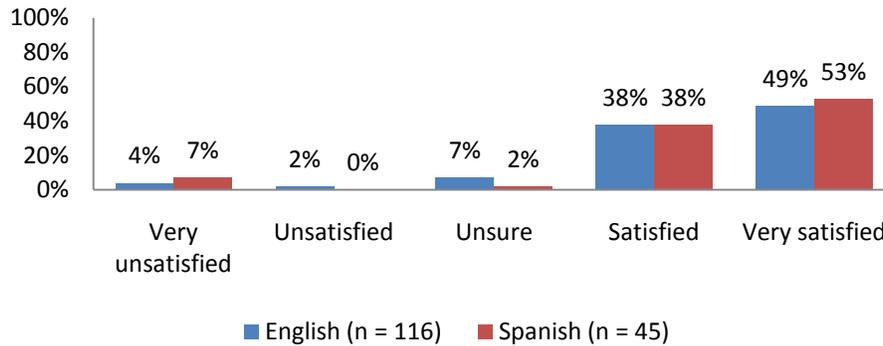
In September 2010, staff members from AISD, community school programs, and Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) were surveyed regarding their experiences with the referral and evaluation processes. By early November, online surveys were completed by 61 staff members from AISD and 19 staff members from community school programs and ECI.

## Parent Survey Results

### Multiple Choice Items

Parents were asked to rate their satisfaction with the referral for their child's evaluation. As shown in Figure 1, 49% of parents responding to the English version of the survey reported being very satisfied, 38% reported being satisfied, 7% reported being unsure, 2% reported being unsatisfied, and 4% reported being very unsatisfied; 53% of parents responding to the Spanish version of the survey reported being very satisfied, 38% reported being satisfied, 2% reported being unsure, 0% reported being unsatisfied, and 7% reported being very unsatisfied.

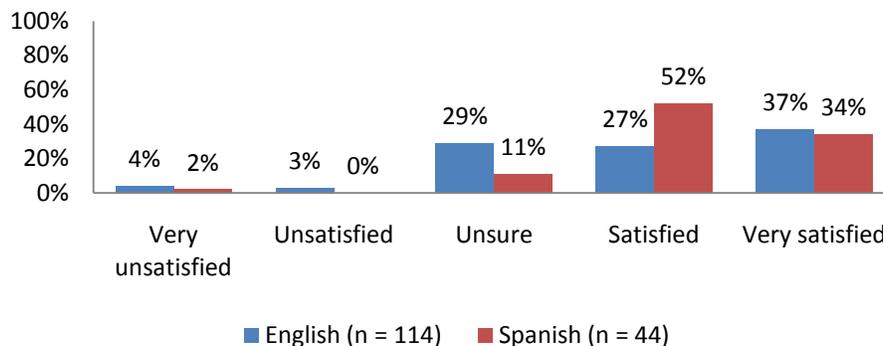
Figure 1. Parents' Satisfaction With the Referral for Their Child's Evaluation



Source. PPCD Parent Survey, 2010

Parents were asked to rate their satisfaction with the screening process. As shown in Figure 2, 37% of parents responding to the English version of the survey reported being very satisfied, 27% reported being satisfied, 29% reported being unsure, 3% reported being unsatisfied, and 4% reported being very unsatisfied; 34% of parents responding to the Spanish version of the survey reported being very satisfied, 52% reported being satisfied, 11% reported being unsure, 0% reported being unsatisfied, and 2% reported being very unsatisfied.

Figure 2. Parents' Satisfaction With the Screening Process

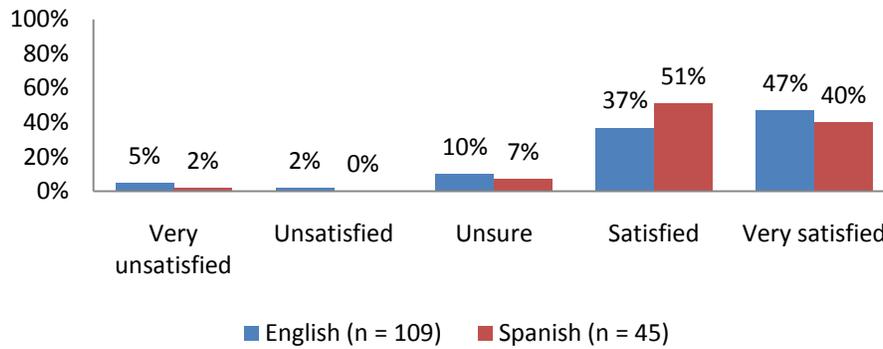


Source. PPCD Parent Survey, 2010

Parents were asked to rate their satisfaction with the evaluation process. As shown in Figure 3, 47% of parents responding to the English version of the survey reported being very satisfied, 37% reported being satisfied, 10% reported being unsure, 2% reported being unsatisfied, and 5% reported being very unsatisfied; 40% of parents responding to the Spanish version of the survey reported being very

satisfied, 51% reported being satisfied, 7% reported being unsure, 0% reported being unsatisfied, and 2% reported being very unsatisfied.

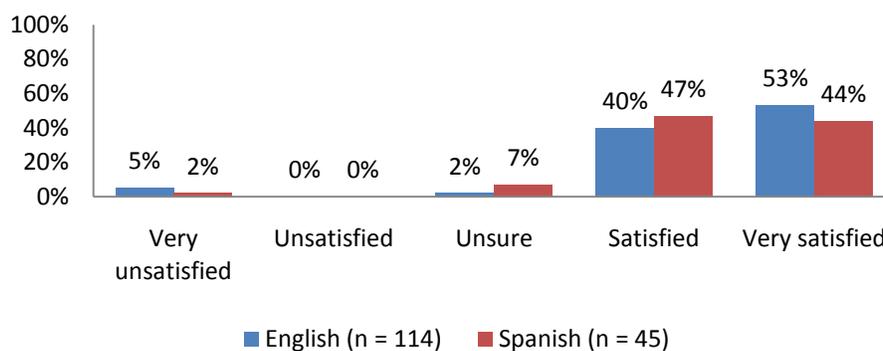
Figure 3. Parents' Satisfaction With the Evaluation Process



Source. PPCD Parent Survey, 2010

Parents were asked to rate their satisfaction with the ARD process. As shown in Figure 4, 53% of parents responding to the English version of the survey reported being very satisfied, 40% reported being satisfied, 2% reported being unsure, 0% reported being unsatisfied, and 5% reported being very unsatisfied; 44% of parents responding to the Spanish version of the survey reported being very satisfied, 47% reported being satisfied, 7% reported being unsure, 0% reported being unsatisfied, and 2% reported being very unsatisfied.

Figure 4. Parent's Satisfaction With the Admission, Review, and Dismissal (ARD) Process

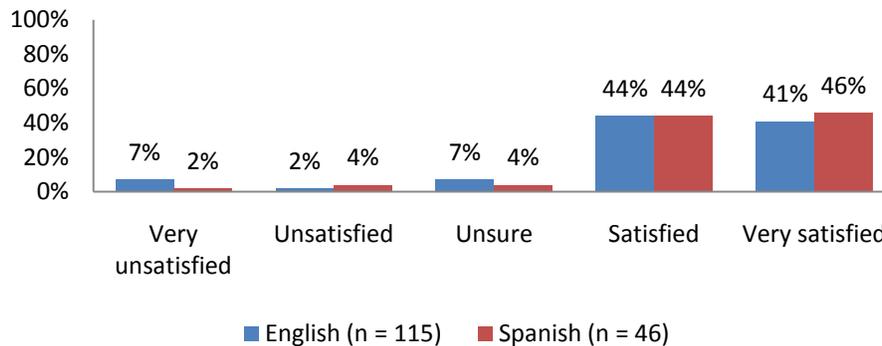


Source. PPCD Parent Survey, 2010

Parents were asked to rate their satisfaction with length of time between referral and start of services. As shown in Figure 5, 41% of parents responding to the English version of the survey reported being very satisfied, 44% reported being satisfied, 7% reported being unsure, 2% reported being unsatisfied,

and 7% reported being very unsatisfied; 46% of parents responding to the Spanish version of the survey reported being very satisfied, 44% reported being satisfied, 4% reported being unsure, 4% reported being unsatisfied, and 2% reported being very unsatisfied.

Figure 5. Parent’s Satisfaction With the Length of Time Between Referral and Start of Services



Source. PPCD Parent Survey, 2010

### Parent Comments

Parents were asked for comments or suggestions about improvement. Forty percent of the surveys returned included comments. Forty-four percent of English surveys had comments; 30% of Spanish surveys had comments. Sixty-five percent of all comments were positive; 91% of comments written in Spanish were positive. For example, one parent wrote, “Agradezco a PPCD y la exelente progreso de mi hijo, y gracias alas maestras por sus gran esfuerzo y la educacion que le dan ami niño.” (English translation: I appreciate PPCD and my son's excellent progress, and thank you to the teachers for their great efforts and the education they give my child.) Sixteen percent of the comments addressed the length of time between screening and start of services. For example, one parent wrote, “For a child who is already behind, time is of the essence, and nearly 6 months, I feel, was too long.” Another parent reported, “The school year was almost over before he got in.” Others stated that there was not enough time between the evaluation and the start of school. Two parents wrote about the evaluation itself. One parent suggested that the evaluation last more than an hour and include an in-home observation; the other parent wrote that the evaluation focused on verbal skills only. Two parents reported that they would like PPCD classes to be longer than 3 hours. One parent objected to the many acronyms to learn (e.g., PPCD and ARD).

### Summary of Parent Survey Results

Overall, parents reported being satisfied or very satisfied with the referral for evaluation, screening process, evaluation process, ARD process, and length of time between the referral and start of

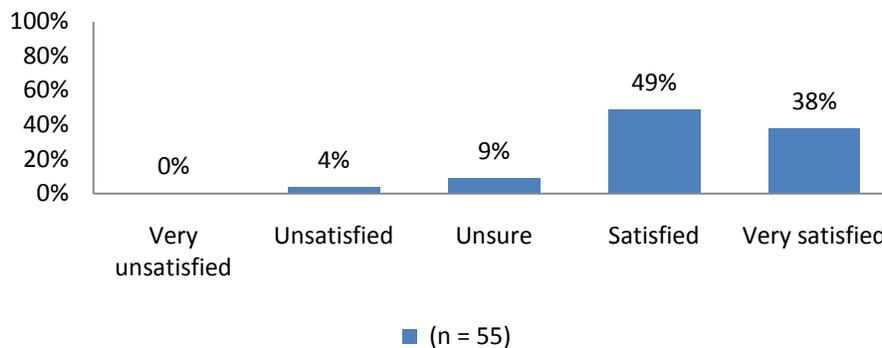
services. Sixty-five percent of written comments were positive. Suggestions for improvement focused on the length of time between screening and start of services, the length of time between start of services and the start of school, the evaluation process, the length of PPCD classes, and use of acronyms.

## AISD PPCD Staff Survey Results

### Multiple Choice Items

Staff members from PPCD programs in AISD were asked to rate their satisfaction with information provided by the PPCD evaluation team. As shown in Figure 6, 38% of AISD PPCD staff reported being very satisfied, 49% reported being satisfied, 9% reported being unsure, 4% reported being unsatisfied, and 0% reported being very unsatisfied.

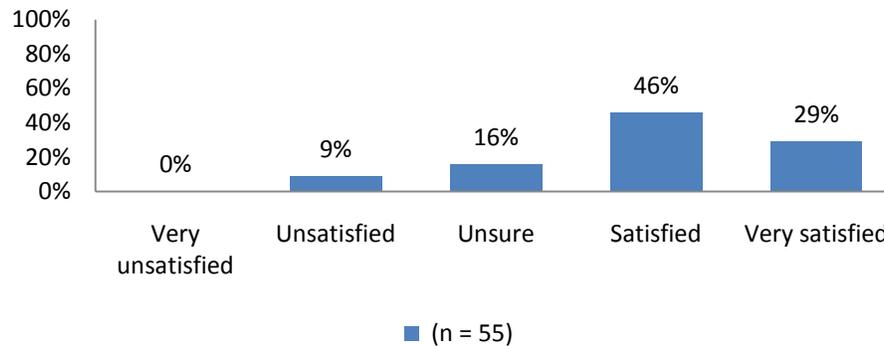
Figure 6. AISD Preschool Program for Children With Disabilities (PPCD) Staff Members' Satisfaction With Information Provided by the PPCD Evaluation Team



Source. AISD PPCD Staff Survey, 2010

PPCD staff members from AISD were asked to rate their satisfaction with timelines of information provided by the PPCD evaluation team. As shown in Figure 7, 29% of AISD PPCD staff reported being very satisfied, 46% reported being satisfied, 16% reported being unsure, 9% reported being unsatisfied, and 0% reported being very unsatisfied.

Figure 7. AISD Preschool Program for Children With Disabilities (PPCD) Staff Members' Satisfaction With Timelines of Information Provided by the PPCD Evaluation Team



Source. AISD PPCD Staff Survey, 2010

Thirty-four percent of respondents provided comments regarding the information and the timeliness of the information provided by the PPCD evaluators. Nine respondents reported that the information was sometimes incomplete. According to one staff member, “At times, there have been evaluations received that contained incomplete information, and left me asking more questions about the child.” Seven respondents indicated that the information was sometimes received too close to the ARD or to the child’s third birthday. For example, one respondent said, “I’m not sure where the breakdown was, but I had a number of problems last year with getting reports/folders way too close to ARD due dates to be able to meet 30 day-from-report timelines.” Another said, “Evaluations are never late, but at times we do get a completed evaluation 3 days before the third birthday or are notified a few days before the 3rd birthday that the PPCD was unable to complete the evaluation and we must have an ARD immediately to complete a re-evaluation plan.” Three of the comments were positive. One staff member wrote, “I find the PPCD evaluation team to be very helpful. I do not have enough time in my day to do these evaluations and serve as many children as I serve.”

Staff members from PPCD programs in AISD were asked to rate their level of agreement with several statements about the PPCD evaluation process. As shown in Table 1, 26% of staff members strongly agreed that they were able to meet required evaluation timelines with greater ease than in years past; 43% agreed, 24% were unsure, and 8% disagreed with this statement. Thirty-five percent of staff members strongly agreed that the current evaluation process and information were helpful in planning student programming; 53% agreed, 10% were unsure, and 2% disagreed with this statement. Thirty-one percent of staff members strongly agreed that the current evaluation process decreased the number of students who required placement prior to evaluation; 39% agreed, 24% were unsure, and 6% disagreed with this statement.

Table 1. AISD Preschool Program for Children With Disabilities (PPCD) Staff Members’ Responses to Items Regarding the PPCD Evaluation Process in Fall 2010

Item	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Unsure	Agree	Strongly agree
I was able to meet required evaluation timelines with greater ease than in years past.	0%	8%	24%	<b>43%</b>	26%
The current evaluation process and information were helpful in planning student programming.	0%	2%	10%	<b>53%</b>	35%
The current evaluation process decreased the number of students who required placement prior to evaluation.	0%	6%	24%	<b>39%</b>	31%

*Source.* AISD PPCD Staff Survey, 2010

In addition, 15% of respondents included comments about the evaluation process. Two staff members reported that bilingual evaluations were late or incomplete, and another reported receiving late, temporary placements. One staff member suggested that evaluators should provide suggestions for placements because they know the students better than do the campus staff. Another commented that the speech language evaluations were more useful for placement than the Full and Individual Initial Evaluation (FIIE). Finally, one staff member wrote, “It is very difficult for parents to enroll prior to evaluation only to find out after the evaluation that their child does not qualify.”

### AISD Staff Member Comments

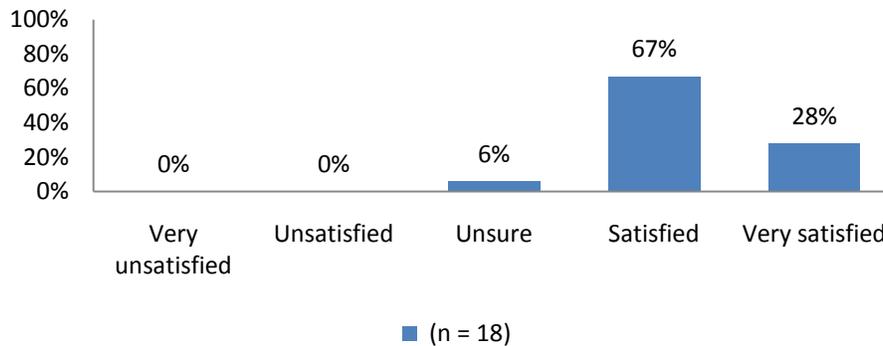
The final item of the AISD Staff Member Survey asked staff members for suggestions about improving the evaluation process. Fifty-one percent responded. Eleven of the comments were positive. For example, one staff member wrote, “Overall this process has been much more helpful and effective than campus based evaluations, and has allowed campus SLPs to better manage their ‘already in school’ referral loads.” Another stated, “The reports I have received are excellent and give useful information.” Suggestions for improvement included additional training for evaluators; home visits during evaluations; better communication with Early Childhood Services, and among evaluation team members; and more evaluators, including two full-time evaluators provided by the Office of Special Education.

## Community Programs and Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) Survey Results

### Multiple Choice Items

Community program and ECI staff members were asked to rate their satisfaction with the PPCD intake and referral process. As shown in Figure 8, 28% of community program and ECI staff members reported being very satisfied, 67% reported being satisfied, and 6% reported being unsure.

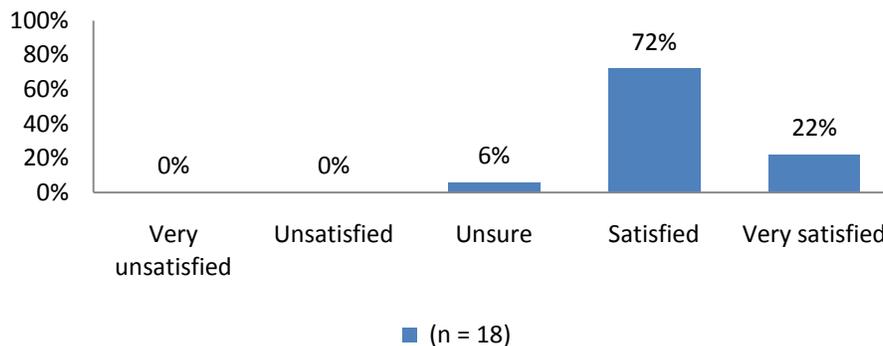
Figure 8. Community Program and Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) Staff Members' Satisfaction With the Preschool Program for Children With Disabilities Intake and Referral Program



Source. Community/ECI Survey, 2010

Community program and ECI staff members were asked to rate their satisfaction with the timeliness of information provided by AISD. As shown in Figure 9, 22% of community program and ECI staff members reported being very satisfied, 72% reported being satisfied, and 6% reported being unsure. One staff member provided the following written comment: “We have heard from some parents who have been referred that they have had difficulty getting in touch with PPCD in order to schedule an intake for their child.”

Figure 9. Community Program and Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) Staff Members' Satisfaction With the Timeliness of Information Provided by AISD



Source. Community/ECI Survey, 2010

Community program and ECI staff members were asked to rate their level of agreement with several statements about the PPCD evaluation process. As shown in Table 2, 17% of staff members strongly agreed that the children/families they served were evaluated in a timely manner; 72% agreed with this statement, and 11% were unsure. Twenty-eight percent of staff members strongly agreed that the children they referred who qualified for services received services by their third birthday; 61% agreed with this statement, 6% were unsure, and 6% disagreed. Seventeen percent of staff members strongly agreed that the current evaluation process decreased the number of students who required placement prior to evaluation; 72% agreed with this statement, and 11% were unsure. According to one staff member, “Sometimes evaluation timelines can get backed up due to holidays but generally there is not much lag. All children I have referred have started by 3rd birthday.” Another reported, “We have heard from some parents who have been referred that they have had difficulty getting in touch with PPCD in order to schedule an intake for their child.”

Table 2. Community Program and Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) Staff Members’ Responses to Items Regarding the Preschool Program for Children With Disabilities Evaluation Process

	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Unsure</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>
The children/families you served were evaluated in a timely manner.	0%	0%	11%	<b>72%</b>	17%
The children you referred who qualified for services received services by their third birthday.	0%	6%	6%	<b>61%</b>	28%
The length of time between referral and start of services was appropriate.	0%	0%	11%	<b>72%</b>	17%

Source. Community/ECI Survey, 2010

### Community Program and ECI Staff Member Comments

Finally, community program and ECI staff members were asked for comments and suggestions regarding improving the PPCD evaluation process. Five staff members (26%) provided responses. Three of the comments were positive; for example one respondent stated, “Thanks for being interested in making the process as smooth as possible!” Suggestions included ensuring that parents have a single, designated contact person at AISD who can be reached easily; having a PPCD teacher orient new ECI staff members; and requiring ECI staff members to visit a PPCD classroom.