

Experiences and Needs of Underserved Groups in Wisconsin Early Care and Education

Read the full report in the [PDG Sandbox](#).

Hmong

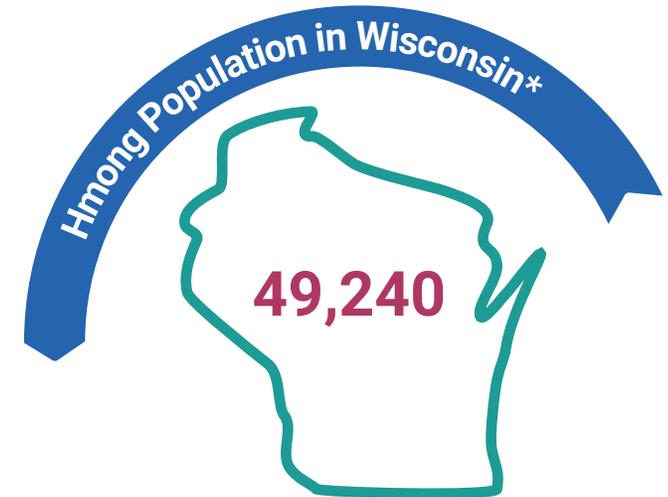
As part of the Statewide Needs Assessment for the Preschool Development Grant (PDG), the University of Wisconsin-Madison Center for Community and Nonprofit Studies interviewed families (e.g. parents, grandparents, foster parents) and child care providers from Wisconsin's underserved populations. The interviews were conducted to better understand the specific context, needs, and challenges families and providers face when navigating Wisconsin's early childhood system.

Key Takeaways From the Interviews



- » Families often prefer Hmong providers so that they can support children's identities, feel represented, and continue to use the Hmong language.
- » Trust is an important factor to families when looking for a provider because of concerns about safety, discrimination, racial bias, and classism.
- » Many families turn to grandparents or other informal caregivers, and these caregivers need support, including monetary, educational, social, and mental health support.
- » Being a child care professional isn't financially sustainable—the cost of getting a degree and continuing education credits isn't compensated by the low wages and lack of benefits.

14 Interviews Conducted with Hmong Community Members



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*2010 Census of Population and Housing, U.S. Census Bureau



Wisconsin Department of Children and Families



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Hmong Family and Provider Perspectives

Equity and inclusion are central to the Department of Children and Families (DCF) framework for evaluating and transforming early care and education. Questions were developed based on this framework and the core areas of access, affordability, quality, and workforce. Here is a summary of Hmong family and provider experiences and perceptions related to each of the four areas. For more information, visit [DCF's webpage](#).

- » Access to information on finding the best care for children is scattered across many platforms.

"I didn't even know where to start as a first time parent.... I didn't know my husband's workplace even offered daycare and was lucky his co-worker mentioned it after telling him about our struggle to find daycare."

- » Child care is expensive and can be a whole paycheck or mortgage payment. Some families turn to extended family members because they cannot afford to pay for care, and most are above the income threshold for assistance.

"I travel from La Crosse to Madison to watch my grandchildren. Sometimes I go home on the weekends."

- » Families feel there is a lack of transparency in what child care tuition is going towards.

- » High-quality care includes safety from discrimination, racial bias, and classism. It also means supporting children's identities through diverse representation in children, staff, and resources.

- » Family care models can provide high-quality care but are not recognized in the current Wisconsin licensing system. Intergenerational families often feel burnt out with little to no incentives or recognition.

- » Hmong child care providers face high barriers to workforce participation, such as the lack of a formal degree, while contributing cultural assets that are undervalued or unrecognized.

"There are providers who represent our culture, but just don't have education in developmental skills or no accessible language in developmental education."

- » Participating in YoungStar is difficult for non-English speaking child care providers and the cost of fulfilling requirements is often more than child care providers can afford. YoungStar metrics don't measure or accommodate for culturally appropriate activities.

- » There is a lack of training which doesn't acknowledge the diverse population and diverse abilities child care providers have to work with. Child care providers need resources with diverse cultural representation, but they are often inaccessible or they aren't available.

"I paid out of my own pockets to find or develop culturally and linguistically relevant curricula and materials, and I learned that teachers can get a discount, but because I wasn't a 'real' teacher, I didn't get it."

