



West Side Community Survey Key Findings

Center for
Health & Safety
Culture

Table of Contents



- Pg 4** Protective Beliefs about the Well-being of Children
- Pg 5** Protective Beliefs about the Social and Emotional Skills of Children
- Pg 5** Concern and Encouragement of the Healthy Growth of Children
- Pg 6** Beliefs about Parenting and Raising Children
- Pg 7** Protective Beliefs about the Well-being of Parents and Caregivers
- Pg 7** Support for Parents and Caregivers
- Pg 7** Perceptions of Programs for Parents Provided by Local Agencies
- Pg 8** Importance of Wellness Check-ups for Babies and Young Children
- Pg 9** Beliefs and Perceptions about Physically Punishing a Child
- Pg 10** Key Actions (or “Next Steps”)



Background

The Center for Health and Safety Culture, in partnership with TEAM for West Virginia Children, conducted a survey to measure actual and perceived norms among West Side adults as part of broader efforts to improve childhood wellness on the West Side. The survey results will support efforts to produce resources and materials to support families on the West Side of Charleston. The aim is to build on the positive qualities that already exist among residents of the West Side to enhance child development and well-being.



Overview

This Key Findings Report reveals data about perceptions of adults on the West Side of Charleston, West Virginia regarding the well-being of children and parents/caregivers and the physical, social, and emotional development of children who reside in this area. As you will read on the following pages, there are three important conclusions:

1. Most adults have attitudes which help support the healthy and safe development of youth on the West Side.
2. Many adults misperceive the prevalence of these healthy attitudes among other adults on the West Side.
3. Most adults value the role of community in supporting parents and caregivers with children under the age 18.

These three conclusions support the readiness for the West Side to engage in growing the positive attitudes and beliefs that already exist among adults.

The results presented in this report are based on the 2015 West Side Community Survey. The survey was conducted by the Center for Health and Safety Culture at Montana State University and provides community level measures of adult beliefs and attitudes. A random sample of 1,600 household addresses were selected among zip codes representing the West Side of Charleston (25301, 25302, 25387 and a portion of 25312). In September of 2015, these households were sent a letter from TEAM For West Virginia Children introducing the survey. This letter was followed by a survey packet with a \$2 cash incentive sent by the Center. Households that did not respond to the initial survey were sent a reminder post card and a second survey packet. Some of the surveys (259) were returned due to inaccurate addresses. Overall, 368 individuals responded to the survey resulting in a response rate of 27 percent. The confidence interval of the responses is ± 5 percent at a 95 percent confidence level. The majority of respondents (77 percent) were parents (26 percent had a child under the age of 18 currently living in the home). About two-thirds (67 percent) were female. Respondents described themselves as Native American or Native Alaskan (3.2 percent), Black or African American (8.3 percent), White or European American (84.1 percent), or other (4.1 percent)



Most Adults on the West Side have Protective Beliefs about the Well-being of Children

93% of adults feel the well-being of children on the West Side is **extremely important or very important**. However,

- 36% perceive **most parents** on the West Side do not feel the same way
- 47% perceive **most adults** on the West Side do not feel the same way
- 37% perceive the **WV Department of Health and Human Resources** does not feel the same way
- 25% perceive **most healthcare providers** (doctors, nurses) serving the West Side do not feel the same way
- 30% perceive **most childcare providers** on the West Side do not feel the same way
- 17% perceive **most faith communities** (churches) on the West Side do not feel the same way
- 16% perceive **most elementary schools** on the West Side do not feel the same way
- 25% perceive **most law enforcement officers** serving the West Side do not feel the same way. Q1

94% of adults on the West Side **strongly agree** that children should never experience child abuse or neglect.

However, 57% perceive **most adults** on the West Side do not feel the same way. Q3

95% of adults on the West Side **strongly agree** that children should not grow up in fear of harm from their parents or caregivers.

However, 57% perceive **most adults** on the West Side do not feel the same way. Q4

87% of adults on the West Side **strongly agree** that children should not experience verbal or spoken abuse from their parents or caregivers. *Verbal abuse means saying things to children to scare, insult, or hurt them.*

However, 67% perceive **most adults** on the West Side do not feel the same way. Q5

44% of adults on the West Side believe physically punishing a child is not at all necessary.



Most Adults on the West Side Have Protective Beliefs about the Social and Emotional Skills of Children

98% of adults on the West Side feel it is **extremely important or very important** for children to learn social and emotional skills. Q6

95% of adults on the West Side feel it is **extremely important or very important** for school teachers and staff to help children learn social and emotional skills. Q7

94% of adults on the West Side feel it is **extremely important or very important** for providers of services for children (including childcare) to help children learn social and emotional skills. Q8

95% of adults on the West Side **strongly agree or mostly agree** that children who learn social and emotional skills do better in school.

78% of adults on the West Side **strongly agree or mostly agree** that children who learn social and emotional skills are less likely to use drugs.

75% of adults on the West Side **strongly agree or mostly agree** that children who learn social and emotional skills are less likely to experience violence in relationships. Q9

Most Adults on the West Side Are Concerned about and Encourage the Healthy Growth of Children

96% of adults on the West Side **strongly agree or mostly agree** it is important that children on the West Side are well cared for and develop well both physically and mentally.

However, 35% perceive **most adults** on the West Side do not feel the same way. Q10



95% of adults on the West Side **strongly agree or mostly agree** it is important that children on the West Side are well prepared to succeed when it is time for them to start school.

However, 41% perceive **most adults** on the West Side do not feel the same way. Q11

98% of adults on the West Side **strongly agree or mostly agree** it is important that children have stability and structure in their lives.

However, 42% perceive **most adults** on the West Side do not feel the same way. Q12

98% of adults on the West Side **strongly agree or mostly agree** that babies and young children need to be read to, spoken to, and played with to develop healthy brains.

However, 47% perceive **most adults** on the West Side do not feel the same way. Q13

62% of adults on the West Side **strongly disagree or mostly disagree** that responding to a baby's cries will spoil the baby.

However, 70% perceive **most adults** on the West Side do not feel the same way. Q14

Beliefs about Parenting and Raising Children

84% of adults on the West Side feel the well-being of parents and caregivers with children under the age of 18 on the West Side is **extremely important or very important**.

However, 45% perceive **most adults** on the West Side do not feel the same way. Q2

75% of adults on the West Side **strongly agree or mostly agree** that raising children can be difficult. Q15 **24%** of adults on the West Side **strongly agree or mostly agree** that raising children can be lonely. Q16

90% of adults on the West Side **strongly agree or mostly agree** that parents and caregivers should feel comfortable asking for advice or ideas about raising children. Q17

94% of adults on the West Side **strongly agree or mostly agree** parents and caregivers do better when they are supported by family, friends, and the community. Q18



Adults on the West Side **strongly agree or mostly agree** as a community they should support parents and caregivers by:

- seeing if parents need help (82%)
- inviting families over for a meal (58%)
- helping children get to activities / sports (76%)
- assisting children with homework (83%)
- reading materials sent home from school (86%)
- providing more activities for children and families in the community (83%)

Adults on the West Side believe parents and caregivers (with children under the age 18) are **extremely welcome or very welcome**: Q20

by providers of childcare	55%
at pre-schools	69%
at elementary schools	68%
at middle schools	58%
at high schools	53%
by healthcare providers (doctors, nurses)	68%
at churches	83%

Perceptions about the Free, Voluntary Programs for Parents Provided by Local Agencies to Promote Early Development and School Preparation

Adults on the West Side believe these programs are designed to serve: Q21

first-time parents	56%
low-income families	69%
families with special-needs children	63%
families with a history of abuse or neglect	63%
people like them	30%
all parents	63%



Most adults on the West Side have positive attitudes about parents or caregivers who participate in programs that provide information on parenting. These parents or caregivers are perceived as: good (77%), smart (71%), brave (63%), caring (76%), capable (54%), educated (50%), involved (68%), and interested (72%). Q22

81% of adults on the West Side believe parents should feel **extremely comfortable or very comfortable** asking a local agency that provides a program like this about parenting ideas. Q23

However, 63% of adults on the West Side believe parents should be moderately, very or extremely concerned about having a local agency that provides a program like this come to their home. Q24

Importance of Wellness Check-ups for Babies and Very Young Children

99% of adults on the West Side (regardless of whether they are parents or not) believe wellness check-ups for babies and very young children **are extremely important or very important**. Q25

97% of adults on the West Side believe it is **extremely important or very important** for parents and caregivers to learn about their child's development from a doctor or child specialist. Q26

Most adults on the West Side have positive attitudes about parents or caregivers who bring their children to regular wellness check-ups. These parents or caregivers are perceived as: good (89%), smart (87%), courageous (67%), strong (69%), caring (86%), capable (74%), educated (66%), involved (78%), and interested (82%). Q27



Perceptions of the West Side

79% of adults believe 21% or more of families on the West Side have been reported to the Department of Health and Resources (DHHR) or Child Protective Services (CPS) for suspected abuse or neglect.

70% of adults on the West Side believe **about half or more** of high school students on the West Side have had at least one drink of alcohol in the past 30 days (other than for a religious ceremony.) Q30

64% of adults on the West Side believe **about half or more** of high school students on the West Side have used an illegal drug (like marijuana, cocaine, methamphetamine, heroin, etc.) or used a drug not prescribed to them in the past 30 days. Q31

Discussion Questions:

Questions to Focus Collective Attention

- What opportunities can you see that the data are revealing?
- What do we still need to learn about this issue?
- What would someone who had a very different set of beliefs than you do say about these data?

Questions to Reveal Deeper Insights

- What has had real meaning for you from what you've seen in the data?
- What surprised you? What challenged you? What encouraged you?
- What needs clarification?
- What's been your major learning, insight, or discovery so far from these data?

Questions to Create Forward Movement

- What's possible here?
- What will it take to create change?
- What needs our immediate attention going forward?

Adapted from Brown, J., Isaacs, D., Community, W. C., Senge, P., & Wheatley, M. J. (2005). *The World Café: Shaping Our Futures Through Conversations That Matter* (1 edition). San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers.



Possible Next Steps:

This report fosters both concern and hope when it comes to improving childhood wellness on the West Side of Charleston, WV. Most adults have attitudes which help support the healthy and safe development of youth on the West Side. While the perception of value in programs that seek to assist parents and caregivers is growing, there is concern about welcoming in-home programs. The support for community engagement in assisting parents and caregivers, and the existing positive beliefs and attitudes regarding childhood development and wellness provide support for further action.

Your voice matters in transforming childhood wellness and helping your community create a new story. Data are only helpful when put into action. Here are key actions that you can take:

- Share and discuss this report with council members, community leaders, and friends
- Use this information to promote hope to successfully increase efforts to support healthy childhood development and wellness
- Continue to educate about and facilitate clear guidelines among adults regarding the safe and healthy development of youth
- Use this report to correct misperceptions within the community relating to adult attitudes and beliefs concerning childhood development and wellness
- Integrate these findings into current programs and/or discussions taking place throughout the community
- Frame media and steer public conversations using these data
- Use these data to guide policy development

Opportunities for Future Learning

Please visit our website to learn more about our Center and our research at: www.CHSCulture.org.