

March 2025

Community Needs Survey Findings



FERNIE

**WOMEN'S RESOURCE
CENTRE**

*Fernie Women's
Resource Centre &
Bellies to Babies*

COMMUNITY

This survey focuses on the pregnant community, and parents who have children aged 2 years or younger, located in the Elk Valley. Throughout this report, we will be referring to the above as 'our community'.

WHAT ARE WE ASKING?

This Community Needs Assessment set out to answer the following questions:

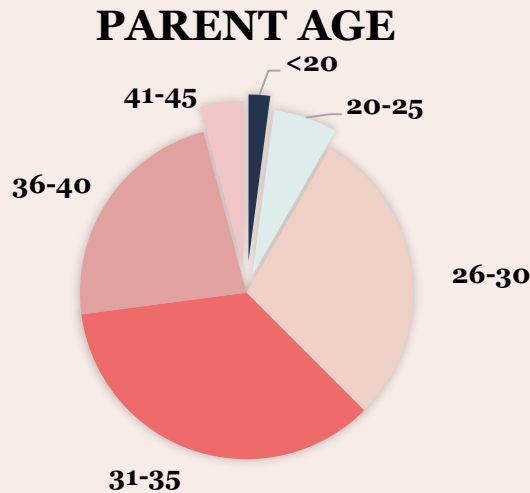
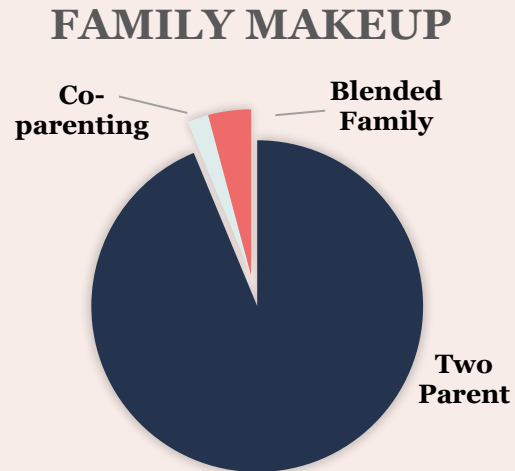
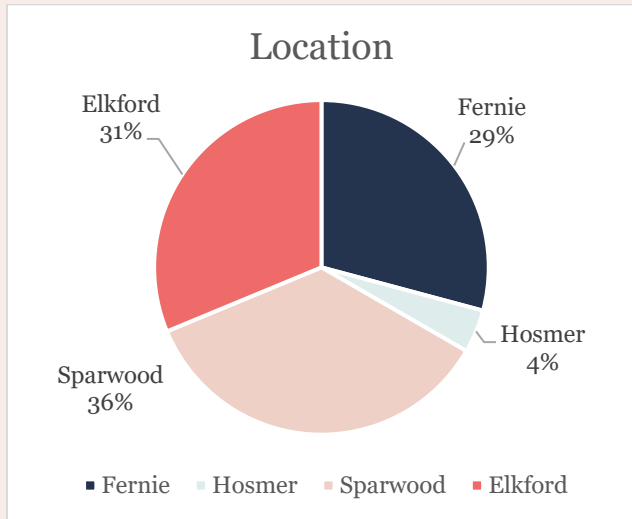
1. What are the areas in which the community needs support?
2. What pre-natal and post birth challenges is the community facing?
3. Are there enough resources available to help adequately support the community?
4. What are the community's main barriers to accessing resources available?
5. What are the benefits of, and barriers to, accessing the Fernie Women's Resource Centre's Bellies to Babies program?

STAKEHOLDERS

We also reached out to other stakeholders in the community such as public health professionals, social and support workers, early years professionals and community program providers. Their feedback will be detailed within this report as well.

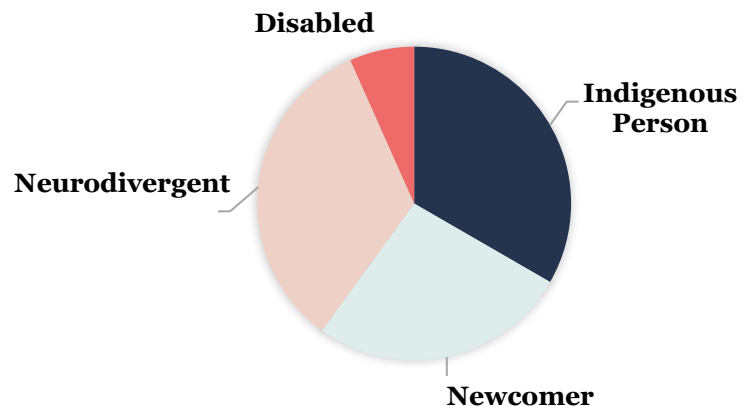
DEMOGRAPHICS

We made our survey available to pregnant people in the Elk Valley, and people in the Elk Valley who have children up to age 2. Data is based on 48 survey responses that were received.



We aim to better our programs to serve the community as a whole and have asked those taking the survey to indicate if they self-identify as a member of a marginalized community so we can better understand their support needs.

A total of 17 responses self-identified as a member of a marginalized community.



And here are some of the family demographics from the 2021 Selkirk Innovates State of the Basin, to get a better idea of what the Elk Valley make-up looks like. ¹

Figure 1: Population age structure in the Columbia Basin-Boundary Region by 5-year cohort and gender, 2021

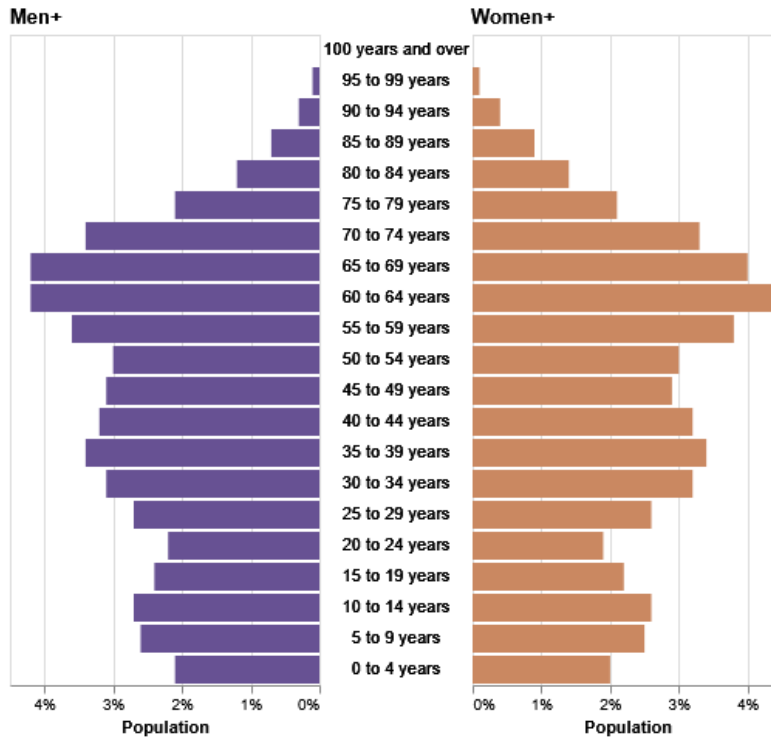
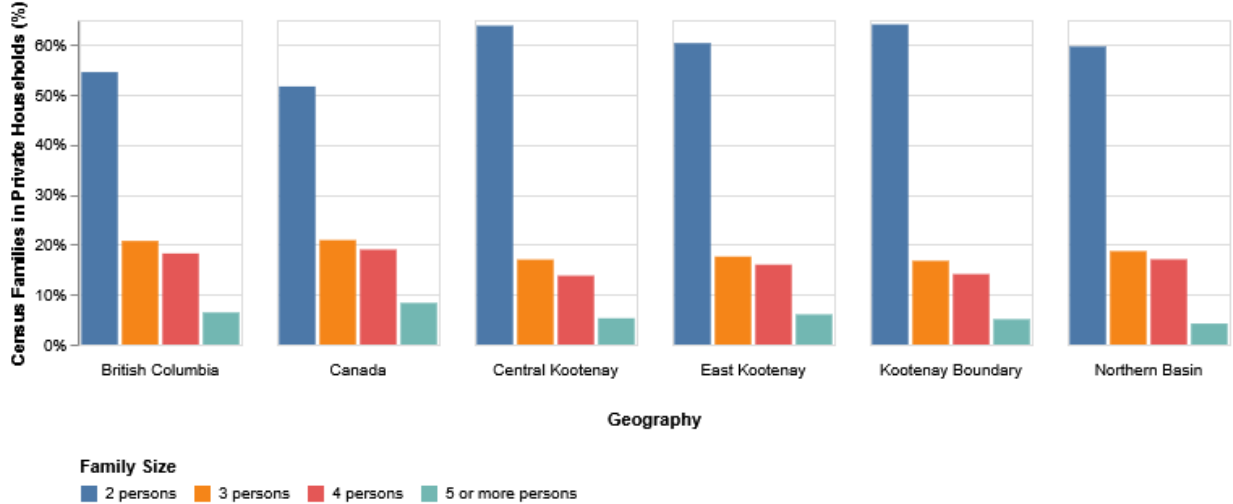


Figure 2: Percent of census families in private households by size of family for Canada, BC, and Columbia Basin-Boundary regional districts, 2021



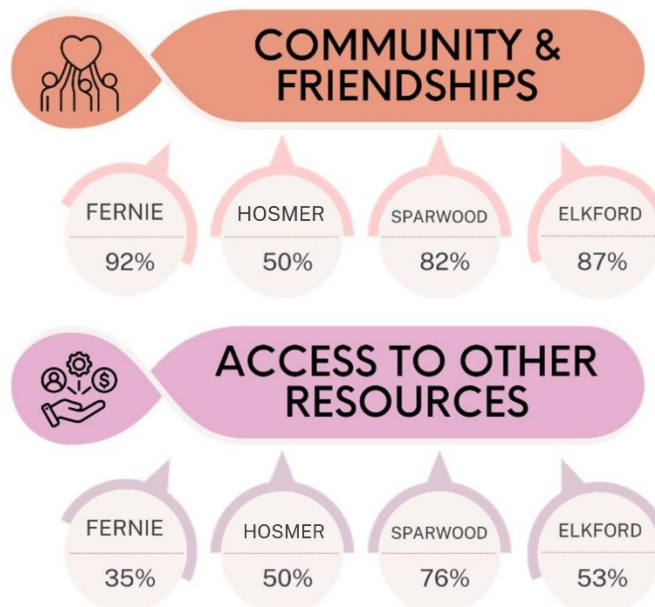
THEMES AND PATTERNS

Using the data received from our Community Needs Survey, we will be analyzing trends, themes, and patterns in relation to the specific questions we set out to answer with the survey. This data will be presented both as percentages of responses received, as well as outlining data geographically based on the responses that were received.

What are the areas in which the community needs support?

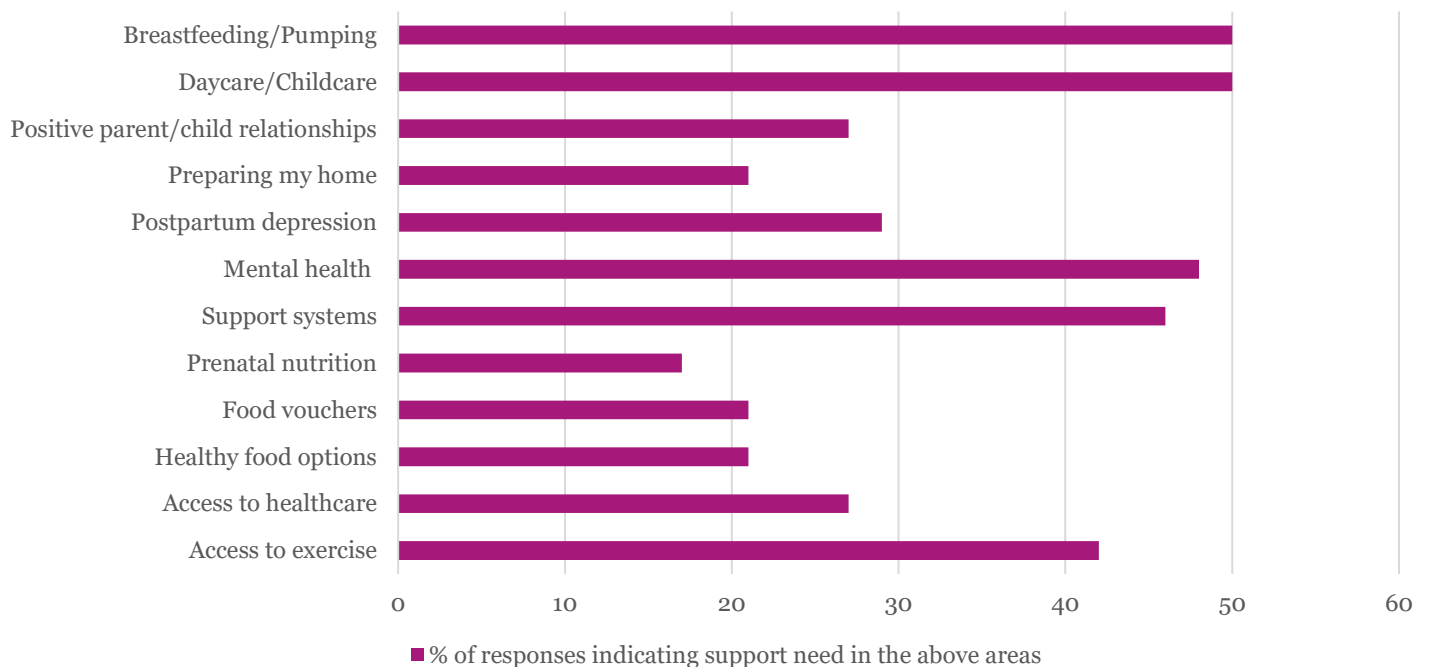
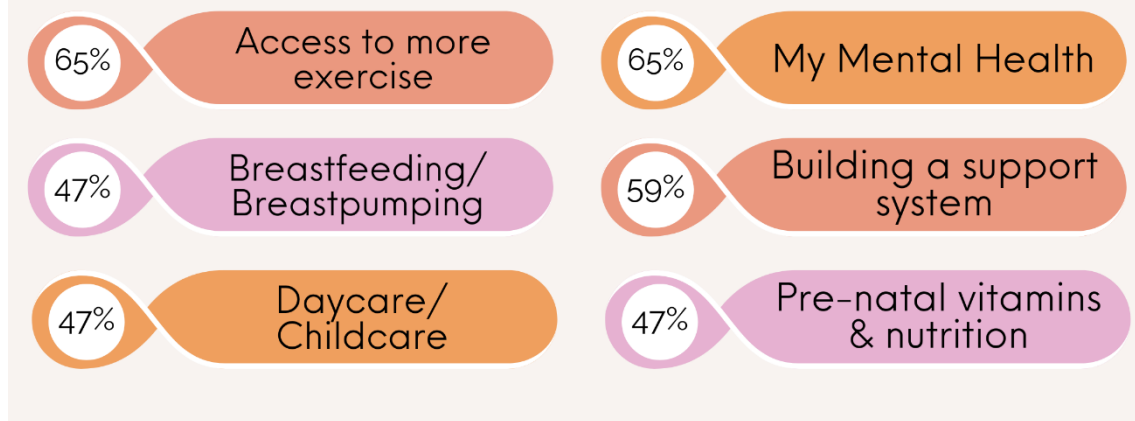
We posed the question: What would you have/what could you benefit from during your pregnancy? Based on data collected, our community would benefit the most from having more Access to Other Resources and Building Community & Friendships.

What would you benefit from during your pregnancy?



% of responses by geographic location

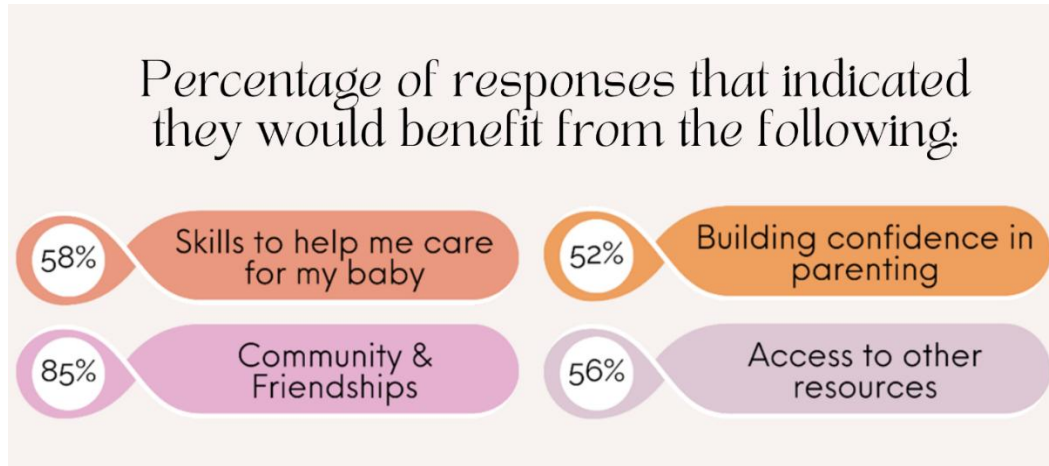
Percentage of self-identified marginalized community members that felt they needed support in the following areas



We then asked what areas our community feels/felt they needed more support during their pregnancy. Our survey findings indicated the community needs more support in: Breastfeeding/Breast pumping, Daycare & Childcare options, Mental health, Access to more exercise and Building support systems.

What prenatal and post birth challenges is the community facing?

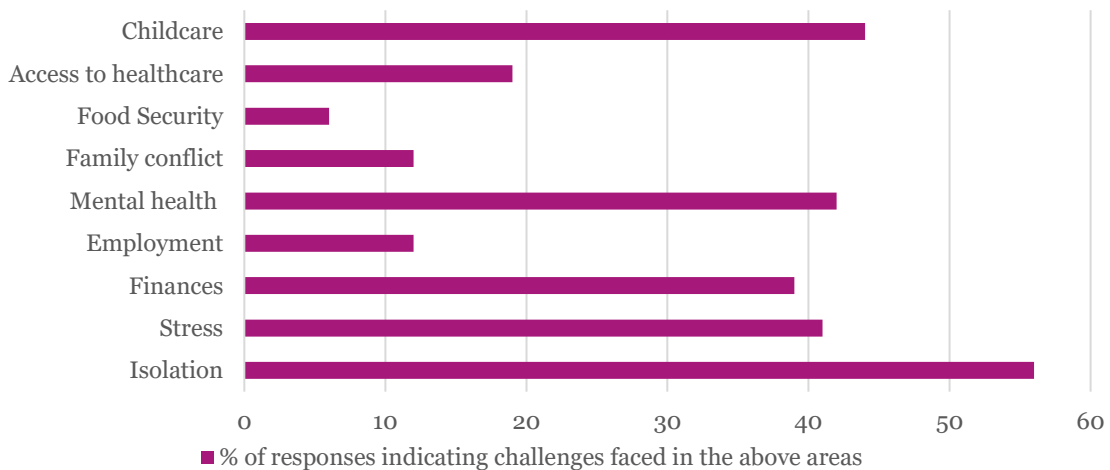
Firstly, we asked the community what they have/would have benefited from during their pregnancy.



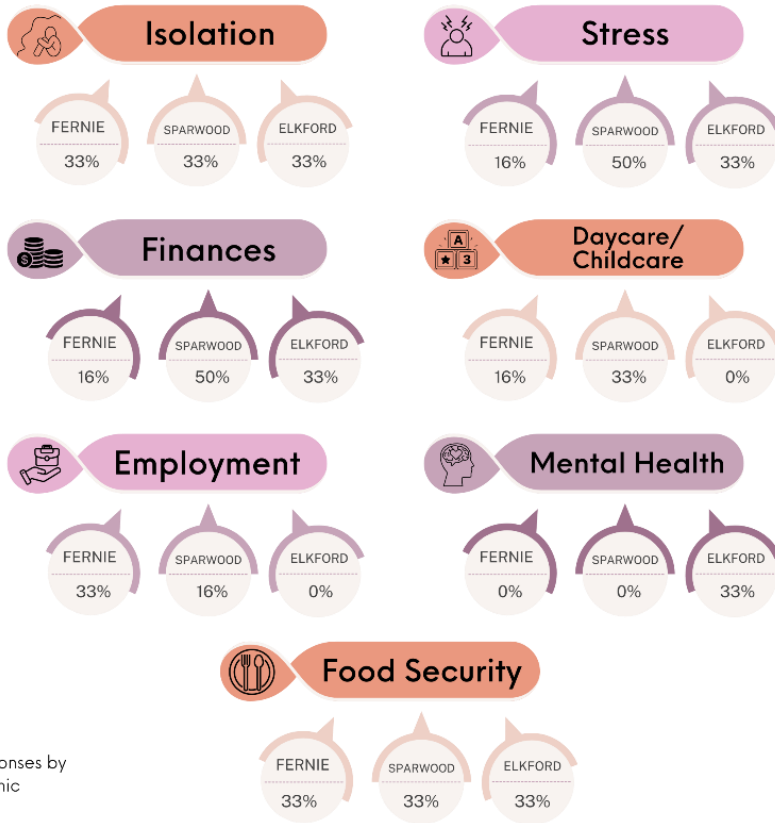
Our survey then looked at two main areas in which the community may face challenges: Pre- and Post-birth, and during Breastfeeding.

PRE AND POST BIRTH

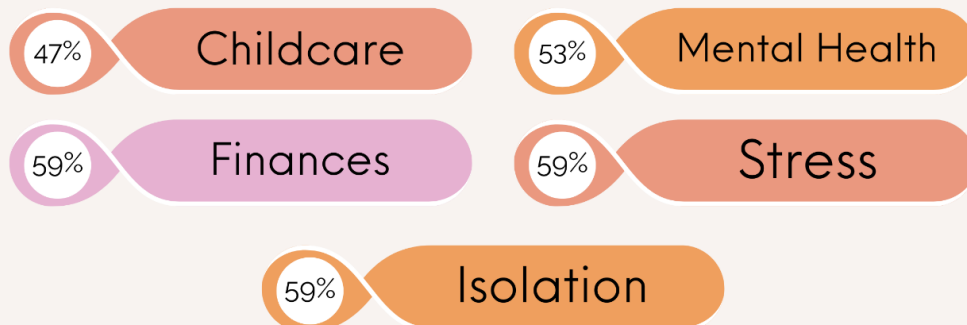
Naturally, we see trends emerge in both the challenges our community faces, and areas in which our community needs more support. Our community mainly faces challenges in the following areas: Childcare, Mental Health, Stress, Finances and Isolation



What challenges did you/do you face during pregnancy and after birth?

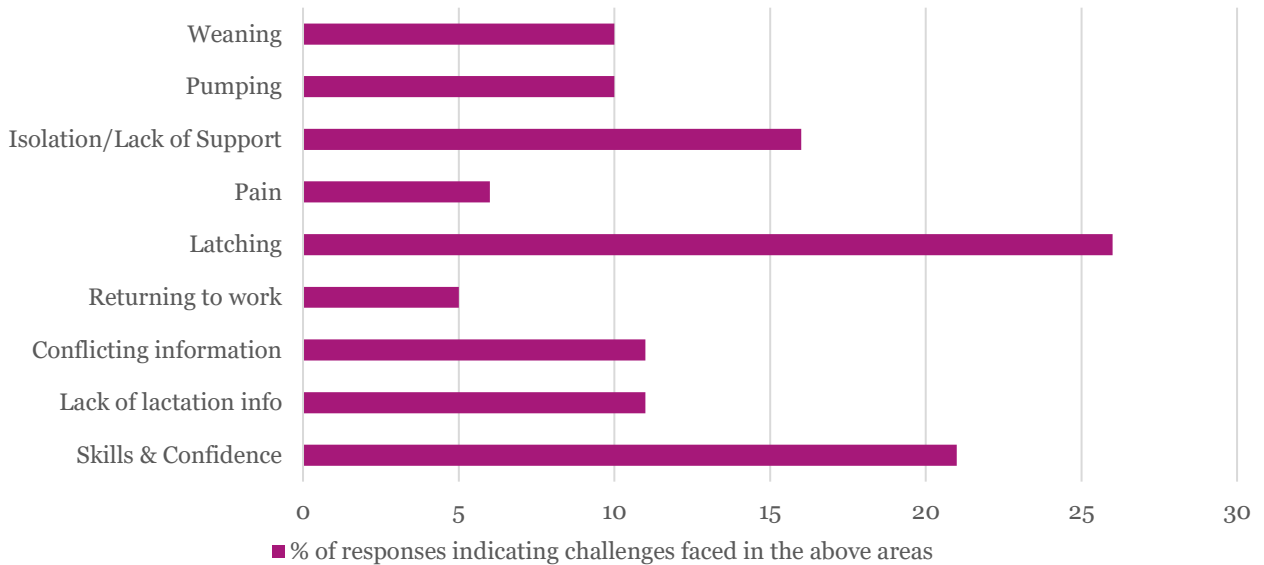


Percentage of self-identified marginalized community members that faced the following pre and post birth challenges



BREASTFEEDING

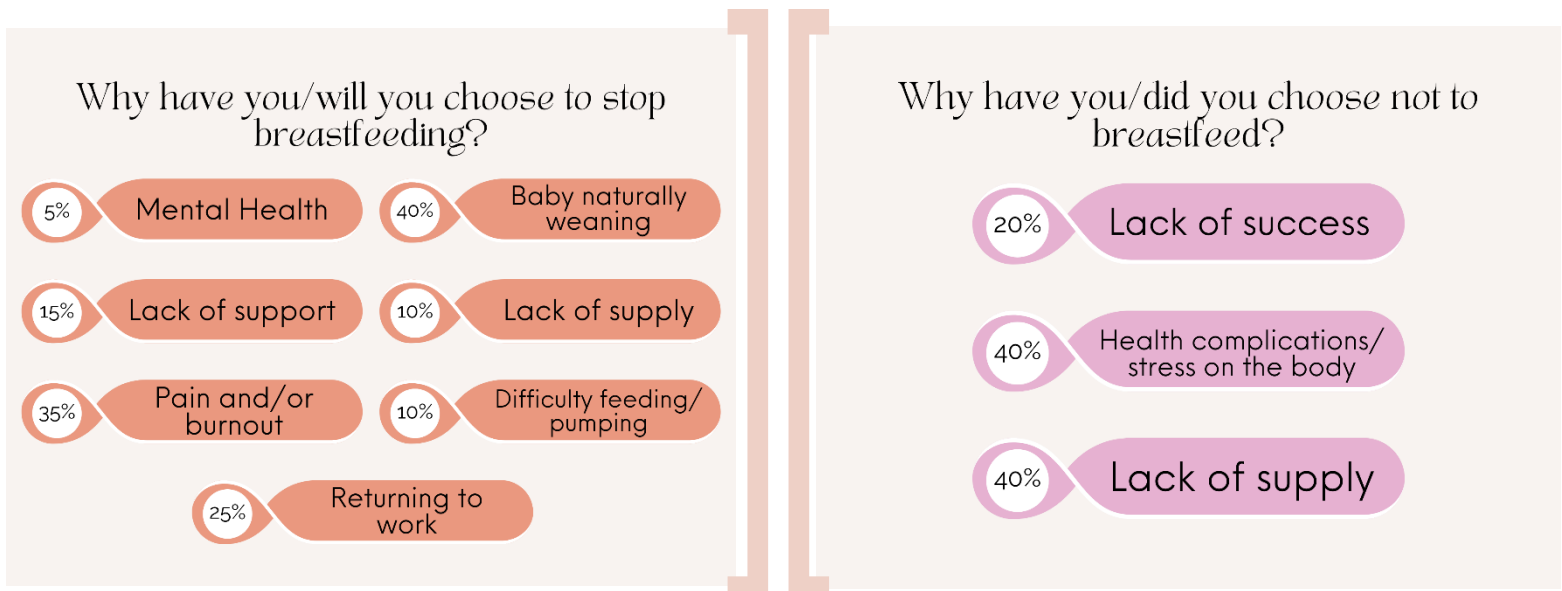
The Bellies to Babies program puts a strong focus on breastfeeding, employing a lactation consultant (IBCLC) and providing one-on-one education. We found that the community faced a diverse number of challenges when it comes to breastfeeding



There were some healthcare focused challenges the community indicated they faced, which were:

- Late diagnosis/undiagnosed tongue tie
- Healthcare providers not supporting bottle feeding choices

We also asked the community why they chose to stop breastfeeding, or why they chose not to breastfeed at all. They indicated the following:



Here are some of the reasons self-identified marginalized community members choose to stop breastfeeding:

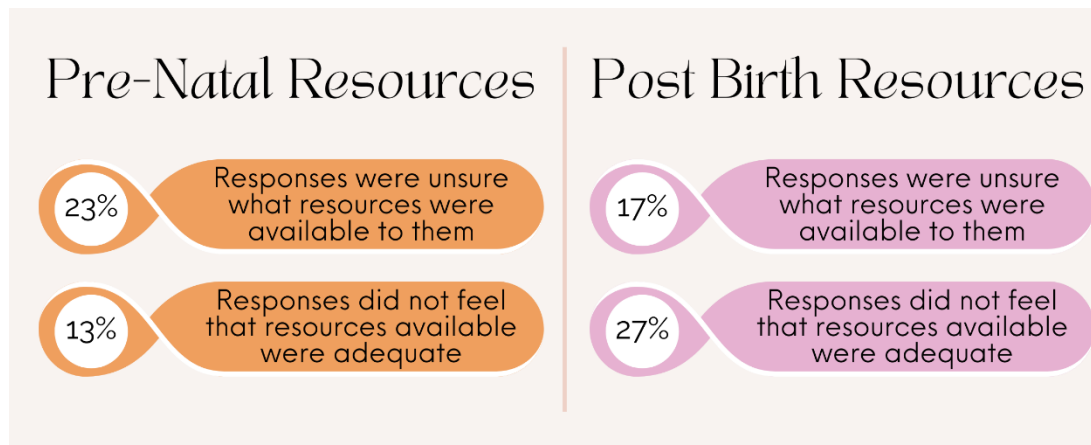
- Returning to work
- Supply issues
- Burnout or pain
- Difficulty feeding
- Baby naturally weaning

Are there enough resources available to adequately support the community?

Overall, our community found that there were adequate resources available to them.

- 63% of responses felt there were adequate prenatal resources available to them
- 52% of responses felt there were adequate post-birth resources available to them

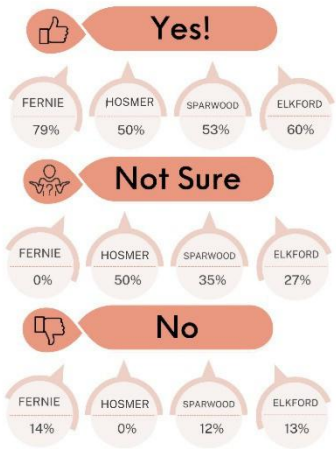
Those who did not believe there were adequate resources available to them fell into two camps



Those who self-identified as members of a marginalized community felt the following about pre and post natal resources available:

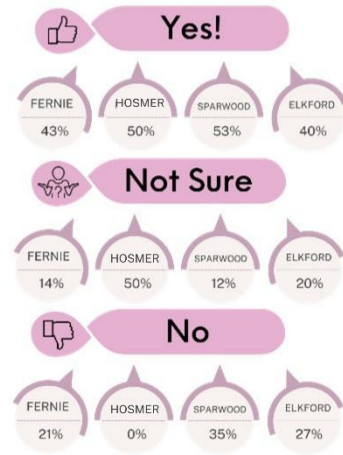
- Overall, 90 % of responses felt there were adequate pre-natal resources available
- 45% felt there were adequate post natal resources available, and 55% did not feel there were adequate post natal resources available

Are there adequate pre-natal resources available?



% of responses by geographic location

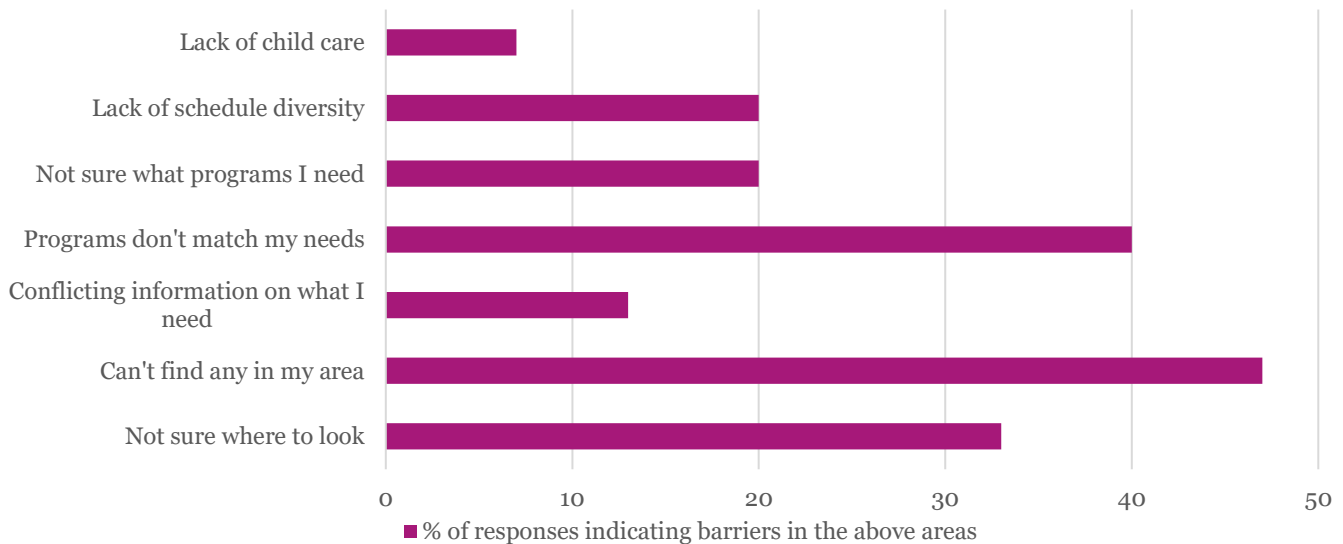
Are there adequate post birth resources available?



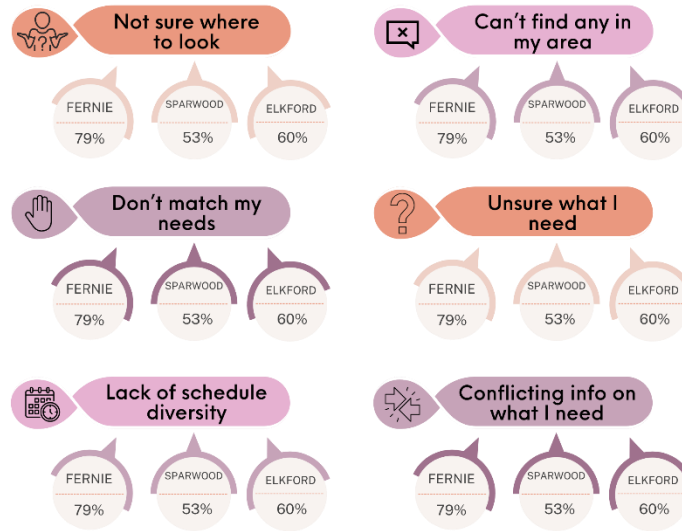
% of responses by geographic location

What are the community's main barriers to accessing resources that are available to them?

Our survey found that the community indicated the following as primary reasons they could not access available programs: being unsure where to look, not finding any in their area, and feeling that the programs available didn't match their needs.



Why do resources feel unavailable/inaccessible?



% of responses by geographic location

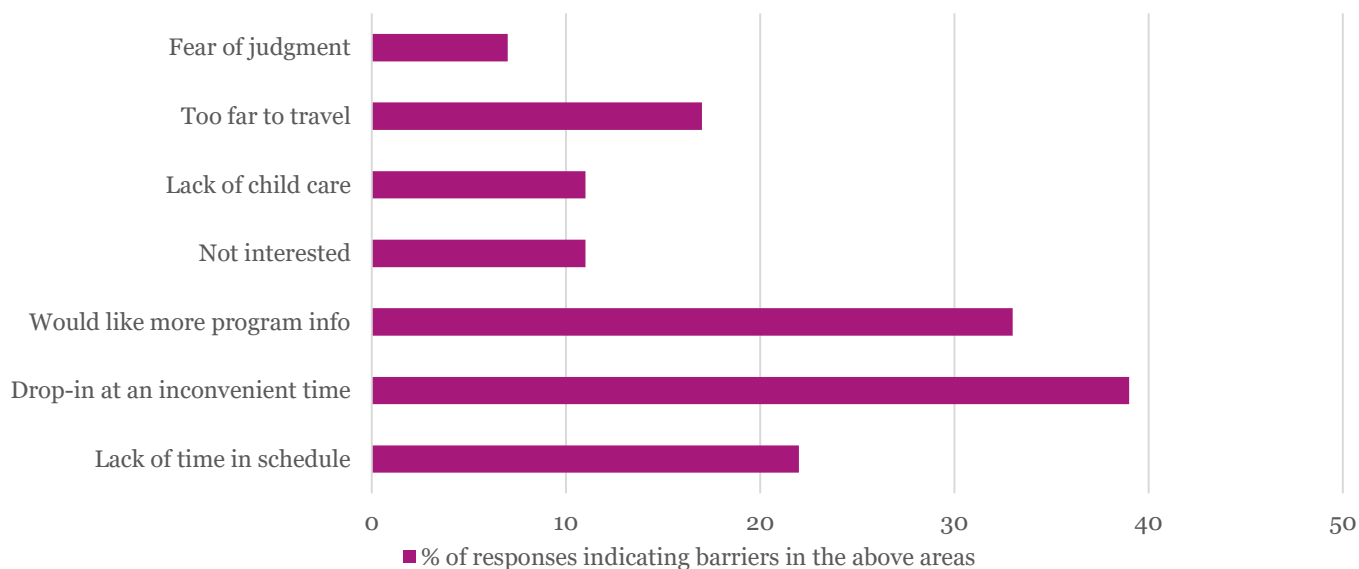
Reasons self-identified marginalized community members felt resources were unavailable/inaccessible to them



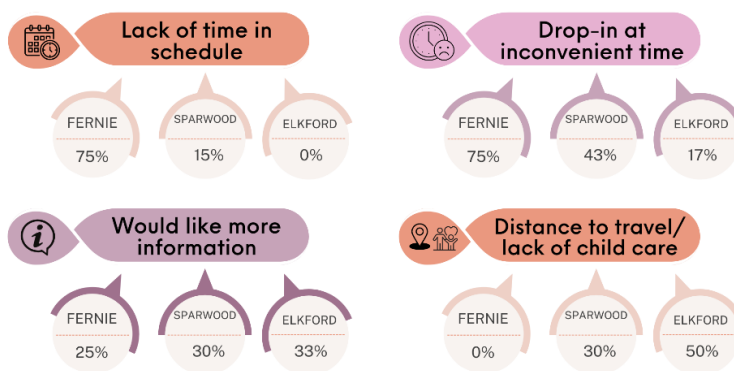
What are the benefits of, and barriers to, accessing the Fernie Women's Resource Centre Bellies to Babies program?

BARRIERS

To better the services we provide and ensure that we can support pregnant people and parents with babies up to 1 year old, our survey looked at the main barriers to people in the community accessing the Bellies to Babies program.

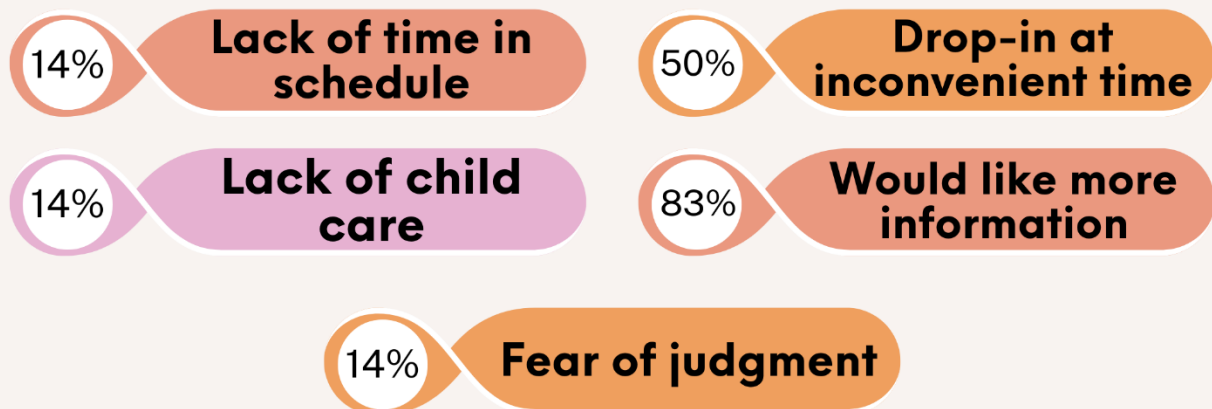


What are some of the reasons why you have not participated in the Bellies to Babies program?



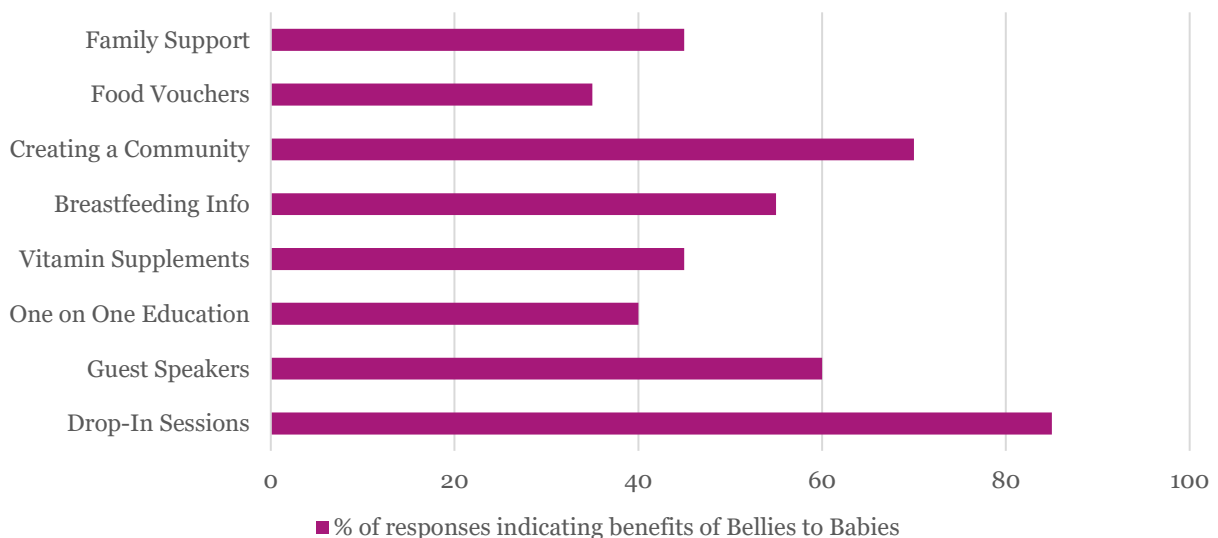
% of responses by geographic location

Reasons self-identified marginalized community members have not participated in the Bellies to Babies program



BENEFITS

In addition to the barriers, we asked the members of the community that did attend our Bellies to Babies program to let us know what they felt were the most beneficial parts of the program.



What feedback has our other stakeholders provided?

Anyone who accesses our Bellies to Babies program is viewed as a stakeholder. We sought out to receive feedback from those who engage with Bellies to Babies in a professional capacity.

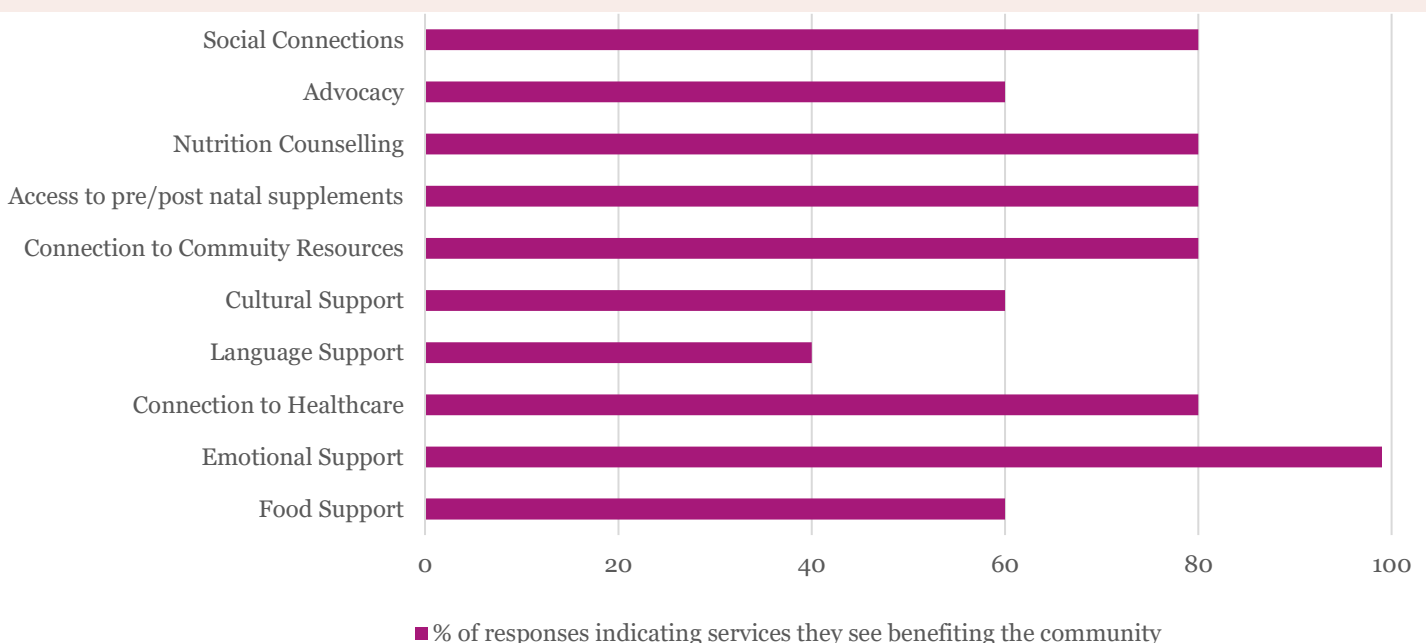
We received feedback from stakeholders in the following professions:

- 40% were fellow Community Program Providers
- 20% were Social Workers
- 20% were Public Health Nurses
- 20% were Doctors or Nurse Practitioners

We asked the professionals providing services to the community what benefits and challenges they see the community facing, and ways that we can improve services for our community. Here's what they said.

BENEFITS

We began by asking our stakeholders what existing services they see benefiting the community

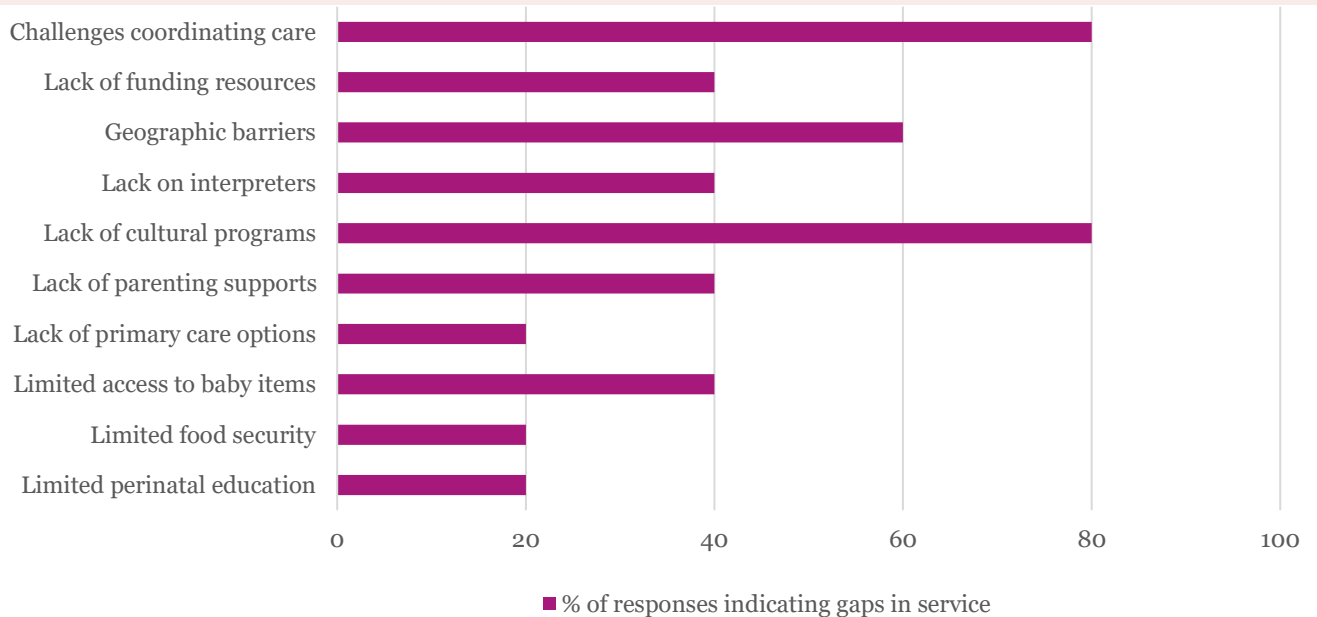


CHALLENGES

We asked our stakeholders what challenges they see the community facing

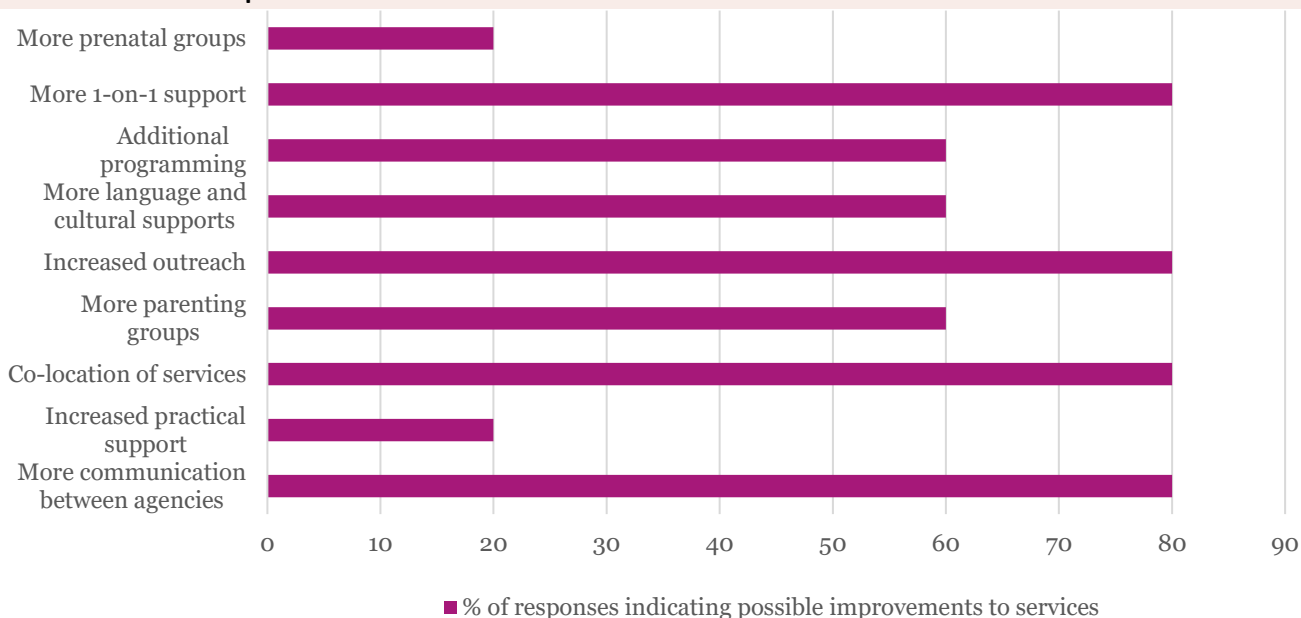


Then, we asked about any other gaps in service they see within the community



IMPROVEMENTS TO SERVICES

We asked stakeholders to select from a few ways in which we could make improvements to services



Finally, we asked our stakeholders if there were any additional ways in which community services can be improved. Some of the feedback we received was:

- Greater understanding of community needs, challenges, and triumphs across all agencies
- Increased access to mental health support
- More accessible and affordable childcare
- More Bellies to Babies type programs throughout the community

RESOURCES

1. "Age and Gender Demographics." *State of the Basin*, Selkirk Innovates, <https://stateofthebasin.ca/society/demographics/age-gender>.

"Family Composition Demographics." *State of the Basin*, Selkirk Innovates, <https://stateofthebasin.ca/society/demographics/family>.



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