

# Family Partnership Family & Youth Focus Groups

## *Santa Cruz County Children's Mental Health Prop 63 Mental Health Services Act KEY POINTS*

One of the strengths of our local Children's Interagency System of Care is the on-going needs assessment, quality improvement, and strategic planning engaged in by all partners. This community input is included as a key part of our local Prop 63 planning.

Following is a **summary of key points** from the family and youth focus groups conducted by the Family Partnership Program of Community Connections (see their Summary Report for more details). The focus groups included 20 parents and 47 youth.

- 1) **Parents** sometimes expressed frustration that "early attempts to **access services** for children's milder problems were not successful, and they **had to wait for children's problems to become severe**...before mental health treatment" could be accessed.
- 2) **However**, "the majority of group members felt that, **once they were able to access mental health services, the services had a clear, positive impact and helped restore family peace, tranquility and their sense of hope**".
- 3) "A majority of **youth** responded very favorably...indicating they believed various kinds of intervention services were helpful to youth...**responses showed strong endorsement of the positive benefits of counseling** and mental health services."
- 4) **Spanish-speaking families** attending Watsonville sessions emphasized the need for:
  - a. More culturally competent education and outreach about services
  - b. More education on substance abuse problems
- 5) **English-speaking families** attending Santa Cruz sessions cited a broader range of needs:
  - a. Transition age services for youth turning 18
  - b. Better diagnostic and assessment services for children with complex needs
  - c. More supports for foster care families and youth
  - d. More support groups for families receiving services
  - e. Improved access to services
  - f. Training for probation youth seeking jobs
- 6) **Overall, the five recommendations parents cited most frequently** were:
  - a. Continuing and expanding Wraparound services
  - b. More community-based supports for youth
  - c. More preventative education and outreach to families about mental health and substance abuse issues
  - d. More information and assistance to help families access services before problems become too severe
  - e. More funding generally for individual and family counseling

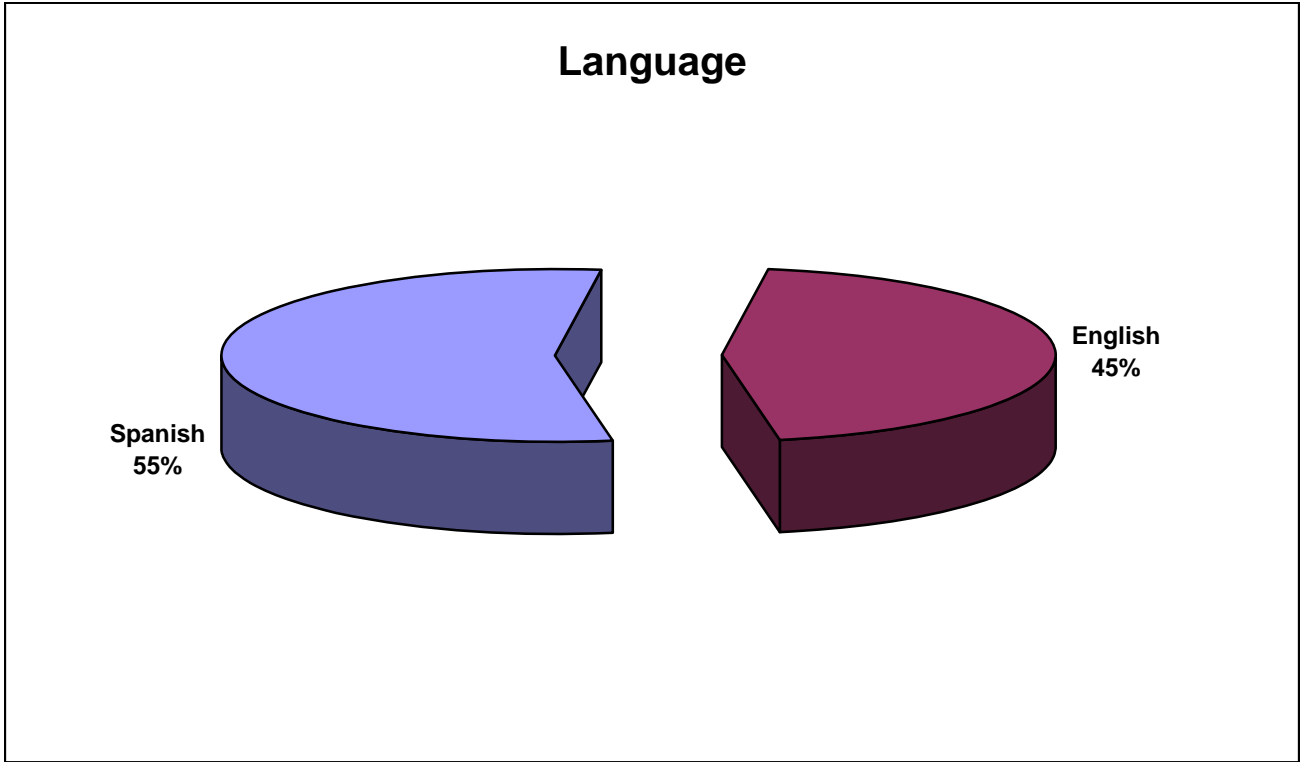
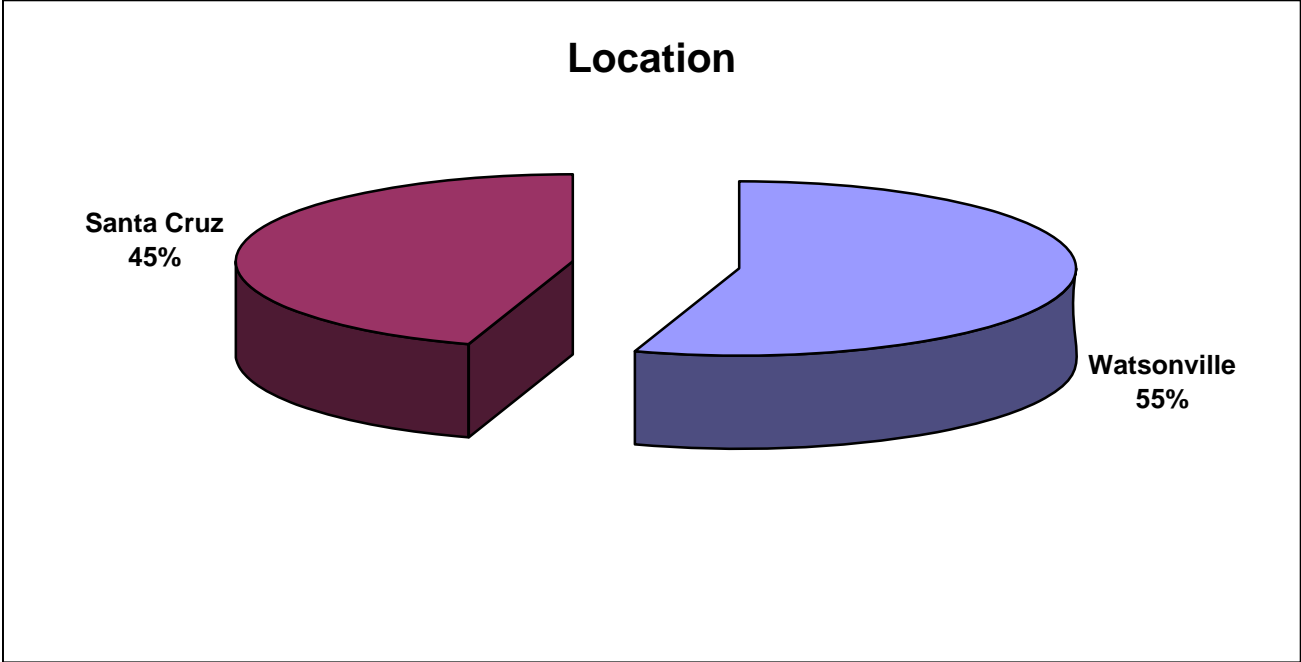
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- 7) Overall, youth emphasized the following recommendations:
- a. More Wraparound programs
  - b. Family Counseling
  - c. Pro-social activities, jobs and classes for youth
  - d. Family activities
  - e. Help getting back to school

### Relevance to Children's Prop 63 Recommendations

- ❖ **Continuing and expanding current Wraparound program** (*Required by Prop 63*)
- ❖ **Increasing access to services through all Children's Mental Health "Gates" (Community, Education, Probation, Child Welfare)** (*Identified in recommendations by each subcommittee*)
- ❖ **Increase Transition age services, with focus on pro-social activities and job links.** (*Child Welfare recommendation #3*)
- ❖ **Increased supports for parents and foster parents in Child Welfare and Probation** (*Child Welfare recommendations # 1 and 2, plus Family Partnership*)
- ❖ **Improved outreach to Latino families, children and youth** (*Identified under Special Focus area across all subcommittees, as well as prevalence data*)

**Family Partnership  
Prop. 63 Focus Group Session  
Family and Adult Family Members  
Total Participants - 20**



**Family Partnership  
Prop. 63 Focus Group Session  
Youth (Ages 12-18)  
Total Participants - 47**

