

KS Parent Survey

Preschool Applicants for School Year 2003–2004

Introduction

In order to continue to tailor Kamehameha Schools (KS) services to meet the needs of families, the Preschool program and the Admissions department conducted a survey to seek input from parents of prospective preschool students. The survey focused on three areas of interest: 1) how parents learned about the KS preschools, 2) preferred preschool locations, and 3) preferred preschool service hours.

Method

The Preschool program and the Admissions department designed the survey in collaboration with Policy Analysis & System Evaluation (PASE). During the last week of February 2003 (2/24-2/28), the preschool staff mailed the survey to 2,048 families that applied for the preschool program for school year 2003-2004. Survey recipients were asked to return the survey to PASE using a self-addressed, postage-paid envelop included in the mailing. PASE contracted QMark Research & Polling for data entry, data analysis, and production of a summary report.

A total of 1,164 surveys (57 percent of the pool) were received from March 1, 2003 through March 24, 2003. Among them, 679 surveys (58 percent) were collected on O'ahu, 233 (20 percent) from Hawai'i, 130 (11 percent) from Maui, 102 (9 percent) from Kaua'i, and 20 (2 percent) from Moloka'i.

Findings

Eighty-one percent of the responses came from two-parent households, and 16 percent came from families with single mothers. Ninety-four percent of the responding parents or guardians of applicants work outside the home or are currently attending school.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION ABOUT KS PRESCHOOLS

Nine out of every ten respondents (89 percent) reported that word-of-mouth recommendations are the primary way in which they learned about the opportunities to apply to KS preschool. One in five (19 percent) indicated that they obtained

the KS Preschool application information through newspaper advertisements.

FACTORS INFLUENCING PRESCHOOL SELECTION

Parents were asked to rate the importance of five criteria they might consider when selecting a preschool for their children. The criteria were: 1) quality of program, 2) program for three-year-olds, 3) location, 4) convenient hours, and 5) cost. Most respondents (96 percent) chose overall quality of a preschool program as being the most important criterion.

PRESCHOOL LOCATION

Convenient location is the primary factor when choosing a particular KS preschool. The three main factors influencing the respondents' choice of preschool location include: 1) close to home (49 percent), 2) close/on the way to work (38 percent), and 3) close to family/caregiver (23 percent).

HOURS OF OPERATION

The core KS preschool program day starts at 8:00 a.m. and ends at 2:00 p.m. Fifty-nine percent of the respondents indicated they need extended day services. The demand tends to be higher on O'ahu, Hawai'i, and Maui (60 percent) compared to Kaua'i and Moloka'i at 50 percent.

Those who indicated a desire for extended day services were asked to specify their preferred times. Forty-six percent would like school service available early in the morning (from 6:00 a.m. to 8:00 a.m.); about 50 percent would like to have their children stay at preschool after the regular program (from 2:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.).

Respondents were asked which preschool they would prefer, regardless of geographic location. The first choice for each island are as follows: O'ahu: Kalihi-Palama (33 percent, 386 children); Hawai'i: Waianuenu and Hilo (31 percent, 71 children); Maui: Central (50 percent, 64 children); Kaua'i: Kaumakani (44 percent, 44 children); and Moloka'i: Kalama'ula (85 percent, 16 children). All these preschools are located in proximity to the work centers of each respective island.

Implications for Kamehameha Schools Preschool Program

The analysis indicates that the quality of the preschool program is the most important factor when parents or guardians select a preschool program for their children. Most prospective KS preschool parents or guardians work outside the home or attend school during the day. Preschool locations in close proximity to where the adults spend their days are preferred. About 60 percent of the respondents desire extended school hours.

These findings provide valuable insights for the planning and implementation of KS preschool

programs. Key implications and recommendations are listed below.

- Maintain the high quality of current preschool programs and seek to build on existing successes.
- When planning a new location, consider places close to where people spend most of their day time.
- Continue to extend extra services for preschool children before or after core school hours. (Currently, several KS preschool sites offer extended service hours before and/or after the core preschool day program.)
- Conduct a regular survey of prospective families with preschool-age children to seek their input for potential adjustments to the program.

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