

Community-Led Data Conversations 2023–2025

IACS × BSK COLLABORATIVE INITIATIVE



A multi-year journey to understand, amplify, and address the lived experiences of families across Bothell, Maple Valley, Kent and Bellevue. Through five comprehensive rounds of community café conversations, we've gathered invaluable insights on accessibility, safety, emergency preparedness, child nutrition, and behavior management—all directly from the voices that matter most.



Crisis and Legal



Civic Engagement



Early Childhood



Senior Services



Mental Health



Digital Literacy



Small Business



Youth Services



Women's Career Services



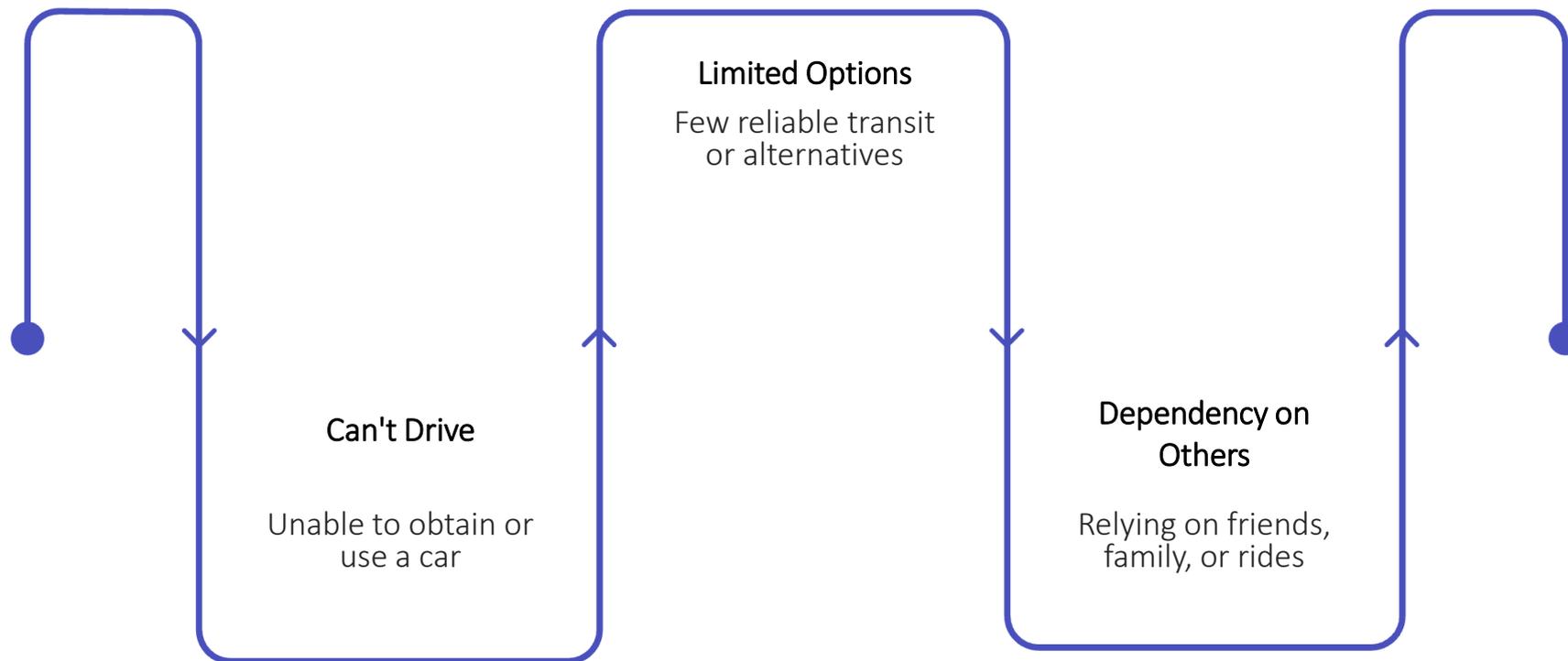
OUR MISSION

We serve the ASIAN INDIAN AMERICAN IMMIGRANT & refugee community through programs and services for all life stages, while fostering an environment of INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY

Our Community Engagement Journey – 2023 - 2025



Transportation: The Independence Challenge



Across all three cities, participants expressed a strong desire for independence, yet faced significant transportation barriers that limited their mobility and access to essential services.

Key Transportation Barriers

- Single-family car households creating scheduling conflicts
- Freeway anxiety limiting range and options
- Infrequent public transit schedules making it undesirable
- Age-restricted connector services (seniors only, excluding youth)
- Poorly scheduled community ride-sharing programs

While Bothell, Maple Valley, Kent and Bellevue participants noted that public transport exists, its limited frequency compared to Everett, Millcreek, and Redmond makes it impractical for daily needs. Families rely heavily on carpooling, ride-sharing apps, and informal arrangements with friends.

Childcare Accessibility Crisis

Overwhelming Demand

More children than available daycare and preschool slots, creating extensive waitlists that can span months or even years. Families must plan enrollment before birth.

Financial Barriers

Prohibitive costs make quality childcare inaccessible for many families. Even when slots are available, affordability remains a critical obstacle to enrollment.

Limited Awareness

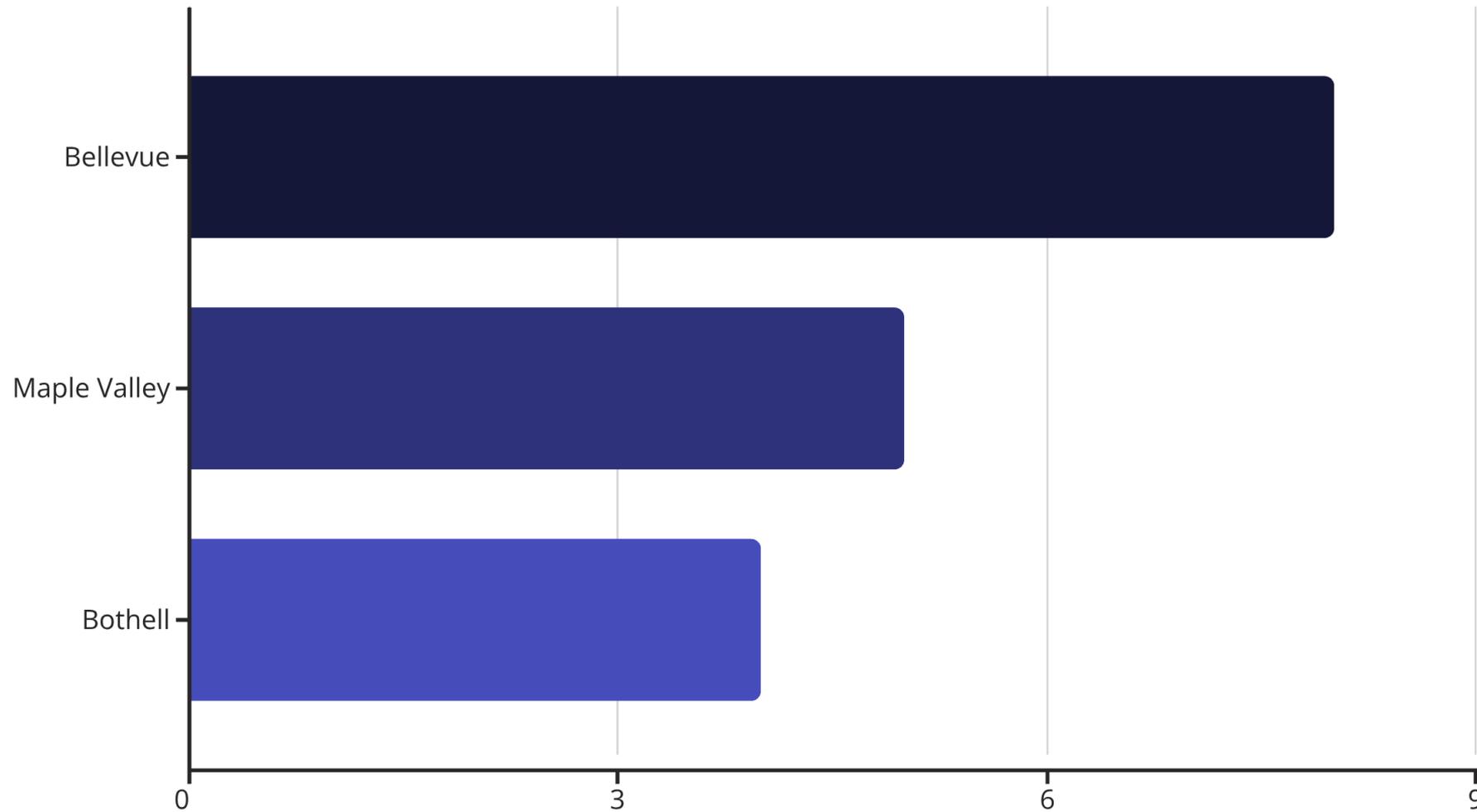
Community members reported not knowing about all available programs in their neighborhoods, suggesting a significant gap in information dissemination and outreach.

Cultural & Location Constraints

Some church-based schools have religious affiliations unacceptable to many families. Co-op schools exist but are far away in Kent, creating transportation challenges.

While community centers provide programs like Toddler Time, these are restricted to Tuesday and Thursday mornings and don't offer comprehensive childcare solutions. Participants urgently requested more after-school extracurricular activities including swimming, sports, and enrichment programs.

Community Safety Perceptions Vary Widely



Bellevue: Secure & Responsive

Community feels safe and secure. 911 calls are responded to adequately. Residents feel comfortable reaching out to emergency services when needed.

Maple Valley: Growing Concerns

Lack of effective police response has created distrust. Vandalism in public parking lots, thefts, and presence of drug addicts contribute to unease. Thefts under \$5,000 reportedly not booked.

Bothell: "We're On Our Own"

Multiple instances of police department inaction. Claims of insufficient manpower. Community members feel they cannot rely on law enforcement and must take safety into their own hands.

Top Safety Concerns for Children



School Safety

Gun violence alerts from schools create anxiety. One reported instance of gun violence in a public school playground. Bullying management needs significant improvement.



Bus Stop Vulnerability

Children waiting alone at bus stops, especially in winter darkness. Concerns about stranger danger and lack of adult supervision during pickup times.



Firearms in Public

Community members have witnessed people carrying guns in public spaces. Participants urgently requested "No firearms in public places" policies.



Racism & Hate Crimes

Reported instances of racism, bullying, and hate crimes affecting children. Need for better education and intervention strategies in schools and community spaces.

Emergency Preparedness: Awareness & Action

What Families Learned

The emergency preparedness sessions proved transformative, with participants describing the experience as "informative," "thought-provoking," and essential for family safety. Many discovered critical gaps in their home preparedness.

- **Home Safety Essentials**

Need for fire extinguishers and knowing how to operate them. First aid kits required in both home and car.

- **Family Evacuation Plans**

Every household needs a clear, practiced evacuation plan. All family members should know multiple exit routes.

- **Cooking Safety Protocols**

Keep children away from fire. Exercise extreme caution with ovens and hot oil. Prevent kitchen accidents through awareness.

Critical Action Items

1. Ensure all children and adults learn swimming
2. Understand home facilities: water supply pipes, electricity connections
3. Be aware of SPAM calls and AI-based fraud
4. Know how to use the 211 hotline for tenant/landlord legal guidance
5. Connect with neighbors and exchange phone numbers
6. Establish neighborhood watch systems

- **Child Safety Education**

Teach children home address, parent phone numbers, emergency contacts, how to call 911, and when to use it

Child Nutrition: More Than Food on a Plate

Feeding is a foundational component of child-rearing and one of the earliest opportunities to support a child's development and well-being. From breastfeeding and introducing solid foods to navigating picky eating and food preferences, families encounter a broad spectrum of experiences shaped by cultural values, available resources, medical advice, and each child's unique needs.

Nutrition & Habits

Introducing solids, managing picky eating, portion sizes, regular mealtimes, and healthy snacking routines for toddlers.

Developmental Milestones

Uncertainty about whether children are meeting feeding milestones. Concerns about utensil use and bottle-feeding transitions.

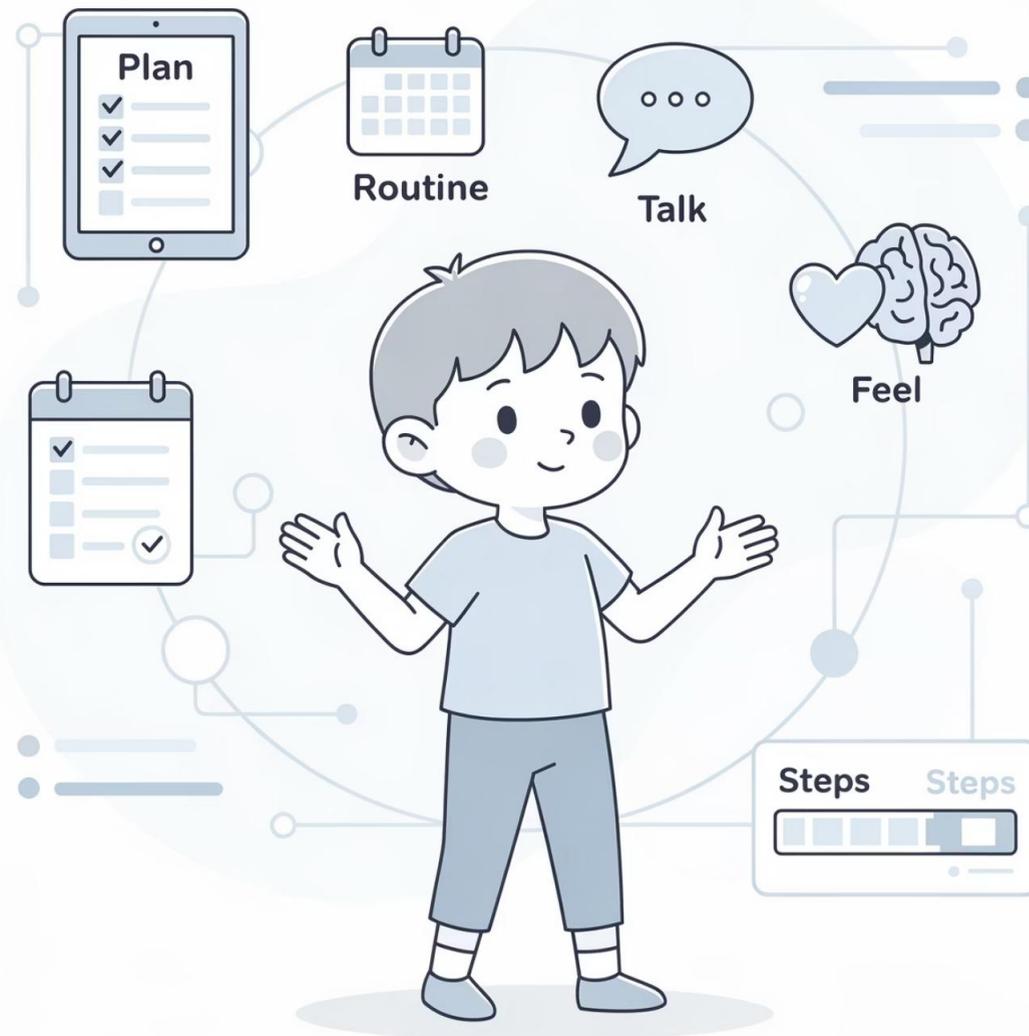
Parental Stress

Emotional pressure around whether children eat "enough" or "right." Social comparisons increase anxiety around feeding choices.

Cultural Influences

Cultural norms shape weaning decisions, food types offered, and feeding roles within families. Need for culturally responsive healthcare.

Behavior Management: Connection Before Correction



Behavior management in early childhood is about more than discipline—it's about guiding young children with empathy, structure, and consistency as they learn to navigate their emotions and environment. Children under age 3 especially express emotional and sensory needs through behavior rather than words.

Effective Strategies Shared

- "Connection before correction"—centering emotional safety
- Visual schedules and routines to prepare for transitions
- Positive reinforcement over punishment
- Teaching sign language to toddlers for better expression
- Culturally relevant storytelling to guide social behavior
- Emotional co-regulation—children mirror adult responses

"We need to step back and ask: what is my child trying to tell me? Sometimes we expect emotional control that even adults don't have."

Moving Forward Together: Our Collective Call to Action to BSK

These community café conversations have revealed both strengths and gaps across our three communities. Families demonstrate remarkable resilience, cultural wisdom, and peer support—yet they face systemic barriers in transportation, childcare, healthcare access, safety, and information sharing. Our next steps, with BSK, must honor their lived experiences and create tangible change.



Expand Education

Culturally informed parent programs on nutrition, immigration concerns, behavioral challenges and emergency preparedness



Strengthen Partnerships

Deeper collaboration with pediatric healthcare, schools, childcare providers, behavior and developmental specialists, resources in parks, public pools and libraries along with trusted relationships with law enforcement.



Create Support Networks

Peer-led discussion groups, neighborhood watch programs, and community-driven solutions

This report reflects a collective voice and shared purpose: to raise healthy children in environments where all families feel informed, supported, and empowered. The journey from 2023 to 2025 has laid the foundation—now we need to build the solutions together.



Thank you to every participant who shared their stories, struggles, and solutions. Your voices drive meaningful change in Bothell, Maple Valley, Kent and Bellevue.