

120 Essential Survey Questions for Family Feedback



Family feedback can help you understand what's working well at your center and what opportunities you have to improve. It's a valuable tool for boosting parent engagement and building a stronger early education program!

When planning for a successful school year, family experience and engagement should be top of mind. A well-designed survey has the power to deeply connect your families to your community, creating a sense of belonging and affirmation that they are seen and heard by you.

Here are all the tips, best practices, and sample questions you need to create an effective family survey for your childcare or preschool program.

Considerations for creating a successful family survey

To increase your survey response rates and the quality of feedback you receive, consider the following elements when designing your next survey:

The purpose of the survey

- Increase family engagement
- Program evaluation
- Family satisfaction

The time of year you will be surveying families

- Quarterly or bi-annual survey
- Annual
- End of the year survey

The format for the survey responses (choose one or a few)

- Multiple choice
- Rating scale (e.g., 1-10; strongly agree to strongly disagree)
- Yes/no
- Ranking (e.g., order of preference)
- Open-ended (write-in responses)

How you will disseminate the survey

- Online (e.g., Google Form or Survey Monkey)
- Send home printed copies

How you will use survey results and if (when and how) you will share the results with families and your teachers

- Immediate changes
- Further discussion with your staff and families
- Consideration for future changes

Tip: The Pew Research Center advises that "A questionnaire, like a conversation, should be grouped by topic and unfold in a logical order."

Best practices for creating family surveys

- Use online survey platforms such as Google Forms for participants' convenience and quick data analysis.
- Surveys should be inclusive.
 - Offer paper versions or the use of center devices to complete surveys for families who may need it
 - Offer surveys in preferred language whenever possible



Beware of survey fatigue.

- Aim to ask 15-20 questions max per survey
- Want more feedback? Send out two or three shorter surveys per year



Be mindful about answer choices.

- If you're using a rating scale, make sure to include a neutral option
- If you're using multiple-choice, make sure to include a not applicable option
- Include free-response (open-ended) questions towards the end of the topic section



Personalize the survey experience by including your center's name in the questions.



Increase survey response rates with clear communication and incentives to complete the surveys.

- Give families a one-week advance notice
- Share the importance of 100% participation and how the results will be used
- Send 1-2 reminders to families who haven't yet completed the survey
- Personally invite families to fill out the survey when you see them in person (and ask teachers to do the same)
- Incentivize your community with a prize (e.g., the first classroom with 100% participation wins a pizza party)

120 essential parent survey questions

The questions below are sample questions and statements that can be personalized and/or adjusted to meet the objectives of your survey.

Tip: Keep open-ended questions to a minimum and at the end of the topic section or survey. Rating (or closed-ended) questions offer quantitative data that can be easily analyzed, graphed, and tracked over time.

→ Program quality

Rating questions (presented as a scale or multiple choice)

1. How satisfied are you with the overall quality of this program?
2. I receive information in a timely manner and in a language that I understand.
3. I understand the center's mission and philosophy well.
4. The center offers a creative play-based curriculum.
5. The center values family participation.
6. The center values family education.
7. The center is committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion through enrollment, materials, curriculum, and communication.
8. How likely are you to recommend us to family, friends, or colleagues?
9. How satisfied are you with the physical environment including play equipment and materials?
10. The teachers are highly qualified and skilled.
11. The teachers are well supported by administrators.

Open-ended questions (write-in responses)

1. Do you have any suggestions for improving our program to meet your family's or your child's needs?
2. What are your top reasons for enrolling your child at our center?
3. What are some things our program is doing well?
4. Is there anything you would like to see added to our programs and services?
5. Have there been any surprises during your time with us?

→ Your child's care and development

Rating questions (presented as a scale or multiple choice)

1. Do you feel that our center meets the individual needs of your child?
2. Do you feel that your child is happy and thriving at our center?
3. I feel that my child's health and safety are a top priority.
4. I feel that I'm informed in a timely manner when there's a concern with my child's health or when they have been injured.
5. My child is treated with warmth and care throughout the day.
6. How well does our center demonstrate your child's learning and progress?
7. I have a clear understanding of how my child spends their day.
8. I have a clear understanding of who my child's primary caregiver is.
9. I feel confident that my child's emotional needs are cared for during the day.
10. Do you feel that your child has a positive and nurturing relationship with their teachers?
11. How satisfied are you with our center's nutritional program and meal offerings?
12. How well do you feel the teacher knows your child and their individual needs?
13. Do you feel the teachers have equitable practices and treatment with all children?
14. I feel well-informed about my child's eating, sleeping, and toileting activities at the end of the day.
15. I feel well-informed about the school's behavior guidance or approach to discipline.
16. I feel well-informed about my child's behavior at the center.
17. How confident do you feel about teachers' skills in guiding your child's behaviors?
18. My child looks forward to coming to the center every day.
19. I'm aware of my child's developmental and educational goals.

20. How satisfied are you with your child's development across all developmental domains:

- Language
- Social
- Self-care
- Cognitive
- Gross Motor
- Fine Motor

Open-ended questions (write-in responses)

1. What questions do you have about your child's development?
2. What are some things you appreciate about the care your child is receiving at our center?
3. What curiosities do you have about your child's upcoming developmental milestones?
4. Do you have any suggestions for improvement to enhance your child's care and development?

→ **Curriculum**

Rating questions (presented as a scale or multiple choice)

1. How well informed do you feel about this year's curriculum?
2. How well informed are you about the daily activities your child participates in?
3. Do you feel the curriculum is age-appropriate?
4. Have you been able to extend the center curriculum at home?
5. Do you feel the children are offered a variety of experiences and opportunities for learning new concepts?
6. The activities and materials offered, reflect my child's cultural identity.
7. I feel that the curriculum is inclusive and was developed with a multicultural approach.
8. How well do you feel the children are learning conflict resolution skills?
9. I'm satisfied with the number of hours my child is able to play outside.
10. The center's curriculum offers music, art, science, dramatic play, and language explorations. (check all that apply).

Open-ended questions (write-in responses)

1. What have been some of your takeaways from your child's growth and development this past year with us?
2. What are some questions you have about our curriculum from planning to implementation?
3. What are some ways you and your family can contribute to our curriculum to celebrate multiculturalism in our class (i.e., book reading, sharing a special meal or snack, songs, etc)?
4. Do you have any suggestions for improving the home-school connection?

→ **Family and teacher partnerships**

Rating questions (presented as a scale or multiple choice)

1. Do you feel that you have open communication and working relationships with your teachers?
2. If you have a concern, do you feel comfortable approaching your child's teacher?
3. Do you feel your teachers are knowledgeable about your child and how to best support your child?
4. Do you feel your teachers have a good understanding of your child's home life?
5. When I message teachers, I receive a response within 24 hours or less.
6. During parent-teacher conferences, I feel well informed about my child's progress and understand how my child's development is measured.
7. The teachers are equitable in their relationships with all families.
8. Do you feel that your questions and feedback are valued by your teachers?
9. My child's teacher is proactive about development concerns.
10. I'm able to set up a time to speak to my teacher about any concerns.
11. Do you feel like an equal partner in your child's care and educational experience?
12. Do you feel included in all decisions about your child's care and learning plan?

Open-ended questions (write-in responses)

1. What worked well this year in your family-teachers communication?
2. What's an important takeaway from your partnership with your child's teacher this year?
3. How has your child's teacher made you feel supported this year?
4. What is one thing you can do next year to support your child's teacher?
5. Do you have any suggestions for improving the family-teacher partnership?

Family's experience and education

Rating questions (presented as a scale or multiple choice)

1. What parenting/child development topics are you interested in learning more about?
2. I feel supported in my role as the parent/guardian.
3. Do you feel you have meaningful relationships with other parents at our center?
4. Does the center communicate with me in ways that are respectful and acknowledge my cultural and/or personal identity?
5. I feel teachers are knowledgeable about child development theories.
6. Do you feel more confident in your parenting skills since joining our center?
7. I'm well informed about any changes with ample time.
8. I feel welcomed at the center and invited to participate in various ways.
9. As a parent, the teachers see me as my child's first teacher and expert on my child.
10. My favorite special events have been _____, _____, and _____. Check all that apply.
11. Do you feel that the parent community is welcoming and friendly?
12. Are you satisfied with the number of center events to connect with other families and your teachers outside the classroom?
13. I feel well connected to at least one other family in my child's classroom.
14. What would be the best format for providing parent education (e.g., Zoom meetings, in-person evening meetings, book clubs, newsletters, and/or parent group meetings)? Check all that apply.

Open-ended questions (write-in responses)

1. Do you have any talents or skills you would like to/can share with our community?
2. What center activities and/or parent opportunities (e.g., parent education, volunteer, etc.) have been most meaningful to you?
3. What's one thing of significance that you learned as a parent this year as a result of being part of our community?
4. What's one hope you have for your parent experience next year?
5. Do you have any suggestions for improving the family's experience at our center (e.g., center events, communication, volunteer opportunities, family-teacher partnership, parent education, etc.)?

→ **Family and administrator partnership**

Rating questions (presented as a scale or multiple choice)

1. Do you feel you have open lines of communication with the director?
2. I feel well informed about the health and safety policies.
3. How well do you think policies and procedures are implemented?
4. I've been offered or have been made aware of community resources that can support my family in extenuating circumstances.
5. When I email/message administrators, I receive a response within 24 hours or less.
6. Do you read the weekly newsletter?
7. Do you find the weekly newsletter informative?
8. Do you feel that your questions and feedback are valued by the administration?
9. I'm able to set up a time to speak with administrators about any concerns.
10. I feel parents/guardians are generally included in major decisions impacting the center and its operations.
11. How would you rate the effectiveness of the director in managing the school and problem-solving?

Open-ended questions (write-in responses)

1. What worked well this year in your family-administrator communication?
2. What's an important takeaway from your partnership with the center's director this year?
3. What are some priorities you would like to see the director address next year?
4. Do you have any suggestions for improving the family-administrator partnership?

→ **Center operations**

Rating questions (presented as a scale or multiple choice)

1. How satisfied are you with the center's hours?
2. How satisfied are you with the drop-off and pick-up routine?
3. How satisfied are you with the frequency of communication and information provided?
4. When I call the center, I am always able to speak with someone immediately or receive a call back within a reasonable time.
5. The center is kept cleaned and well-maintained.
6. The center is properly secured.
7. The center is adequately staffed.
8. The center's materials and equipment are clean and well maintained.
9. How satisfied are you with the payment system?
10. How well does our center communicate financial commitments for the year?

Open-ended questions (write-in responses)

1. What are some ways you would like to/can contribute to keeping our center warm and welcoming (e.g., bringing fresh flowers weekly, painting, gardening, etc.)
2. How would you describe our center's operations to friends and colleagues?
3. What is your favorite space at our center?
4. What is something about the center's operations that you would like to learn more about?
5. Do you have any suggestions for improving our center operations?

Interested in developing your own prompts? Here are some question starters:

- How well...
- Do you feel...
- How satisfied are you...
- Do you find...
- How likely are you...

How brightwheel can help

Brightwheel is the #1 rated, all-in-one early childcare solution that partners with educators to streamline their centers' operations and strengthen family engagement.

With brightwheel, administrators and educators can easily connect with families to keep them tuned in and engaged throughout the year:

- Create newsletters with photos and text: Send weekly newsletters to highlight the children's week, invite families to upcoming events, and add call-to-actions for volunteers.
- Make announcements: Administrators can send messages to entire room(s) simultaneously to send timely announcements such as "Bring your raincoats and rain boots tomorrow for Rainy Day Play!"
- Send reminders: Post thoughtful reminders to families to keep them in the loop and one step ahead of center-wide activities, such as filling out the annual parent survey.
- And more!

To learn more about how brightwheel can partner with you and your educators to boost family engagement, chat with an expert today:

www.mybrightwheel.com/demo