

## Sierra Nevada Children's Services – December 2008 Community Survey Results

In December 2008, SNCS distributed a survey to 140 community members who represent a vital link to SNCS' success. These individuals included child care providers, leaders in city and county government, non-profits serving groups, business associates, and other collaborators. Surveys were completed anonymously and either submitted online or sent in by mail. There were multiple questions related to agency strengths and weaknesses, identity, and progress over the past year (2008).

Of the recipients, 51 people responded and provided us with some critical feedback that has helped us to:

- ✦ Assess the quality of services delivered
- ✦ Measure effectiveness of programs offered
- ✦ Understand community perceptions about SNCS
- ✦ Identify potential areas of developmental need

The feedback not only provided us with information that we have found useful as we continue to move forward as a valuable community resource, but clearly showed us that we were on track with many of the organizational changes already in progress. Several of these "steps forward" are noted below in **bold**.

As the survey results show, agency programs are perceived to be valuable. The Agency is focused on further enhancing **communication, marketing, identity/image, visibility, and transparency**.

### 1. How do you feel SNCS' collaborative efforts have changed over the past year?

Answer Options	Response Frequency	Response Count
Increased	24.0%	12
Decreased	26.0%	13
About the same.	34.0%	17
I don't have enough evidence to answer this question.	16.0%	8

50 people answered this question.

In early 2009, SNCS developed a **joint proposal with Kare Crisis Nursery and DVSAC** on a funding opportunity in western Nevada County. SNCS has been part of a **successful partnership with the Truckee FRC and Tahoe Women's Services** in eastern Nevada County for years. SNCS has also furthered its **collaborative efforts with KidzCount** (Placer County Action Council) and our Family Resource Center; **Sierra Nevada Memorial Hospital** and our Promotora program; and **CalWORKS (One Stop Business & Career Center)** and our alternative payment program.

### 2. I have seen, heard, and/or experienced that SNCS and its representatives:

Answer Options	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A	Rating Average
Promote and support other community agencies, avoiding duplication of services.	2	13	24	8	3	2.81
Foster a collaborative forum with community leaders to explore program possibilities and establish mutual goals.	5	9	23	11	2	2.83
Look for opportunities to create links among community agency programs.	5	9	20	12	4	2.85
Build trusting and collaborative partnerships.	8	8	21	11	2	2.73

50 people answered this question.

**SNCS Community Chest Fund** is a program that enhances our collaboration with other agencies. The Community Chest is utilized by many agencies in the community. Agency partners can refer parents to SNCS for discretionary funds to meet the physical and/or emotional needs of children, for which no other support is available. Together, we serve an average of 18 families, including 32-45 children, each fiscal year.

**3. What would you say are SNCS' current strengths? (check all that apply)**

Answer Options	Response Frequency	Response Count
Programs that meet community needs.	78.9%	30
Ensuring program accountability through measurable outcomes.	15.8%	6
Organizational transparency.	15.8%	6
Organizational visibility.	28.9%	11
Fiscal accountability.	23.7%	9
Customer service.	42.1%	16

38 people answered this question.

“Programs that meet community needs” is clearly one of SNCS’ greatest strengths, and one where – through ongoing goal-setting, strategic planning, and community outreach – we hope to continually improve. Our **new mission statement**, adopted by the Board of Directors in May 2009, will guide the agency to create programs that increase organizational visibility and program accountability.

**4. What would you say are SNCS' current weaknesses? (check all that apply)**

Answer Options	Response Frequency	Response Count
Programs that meet community needs.	21.9%	7
Ensuring program accountability through measurable outcomes.	34.4%	11
Organizational transparency.	37.5%	12
Organizational visibility.	56.3%	18
Fiscal accountability.	25.0%	8
Customer service.	40.6%	13

32 people answered this question.

The **new user-friendly web site** was launched in early February 2009 after a design and planning process that lasted several months. The goal was to create a dynamic online resource that would familiarize people with SNCS – our mission, programs, resources, staff, board members, policies, philosophy, financial statements, you name it! All of the above categories (e.g., visibility, transparency, customer service, etc.) benefit from this online resource.

In April 2008, the **New Family Post** was launched! Published by Aikido’Ka in Grass Valley in partnership with SNCS, this publication reaches 14,000 readers and hundreds of other online readers. The first issue (Back to School 2008) introduced **SNCS child development team** and premiered the “Ask Jackie” column where readers pose questions to our very own early childhood “expert” (and Regional Director), Jackie Herring . Subsequent issues have included recurring articles such as “SNCS Picks” (book reviews to promote our resource library), “Hot Topics” (to educate parents on current issues affecting children), child development articles, and promotion of SNCS programs and events.

SNCS has also improved visibility in the community via **radio advertisements** on local stations, most recently during the summer months of 2009.

**5. Is it your impression that SNCS' organizational values reflect the community that the Agency serves?**

Answer Options	Response Frequency	Response Count
Yes	59.1%	26
No	15.9%	7
I don't have enough evidence to answer this question.	25.0%	11

44 people answered this question.

**SNCS MISSION STATEMENT (Adopted May 20, 2009):** *Sierra Nevada Children’s Services enriches the community by supporting quality child care and empowering families to achieve lifelong success.* Community members also have the opportunity to acknowledge staff members who embody organizational values, by submitting “**SNCS Spirit Awards**” (available on our new web site).

**6. I have seen, heard, and/or experienced that SNCS and its representatives:**

Answer Options	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A	Rating Average
Provide valuable programs/resources to families and children in the community.	1	5	19	17	1	3.24
Effectively respond to ongoing and changing community early childhood development needs.	5	6	18	11	3	2.88
Effectively balance their focus on program quality with funding opportunities.	4	8	16	6	6	2.71
Hire high quality staff who bring capabilities and credibility to their roles ensuring that the agency meets community needs.	6	7	14	13	2	2.85

44 people answered this question.

This is more confirmation that SNCS core programs are valuable to the community.

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**7. How do you feel SNCS is perceived in the community? (check all that apply)**

Answer Options	Response Frequency	Response Count
As a partner.	58.5%	24
As a collaborator.	34.1%	14
As a community builder.	48.8%	20
As a competitor.	17.1%	7
As a business.	26.8%	11

41 people answered this question.

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**8. Do you believe that SNCS is recognized as an important “Early Childhood Development” leader in the community?**

Answer Options	Response Frequency	Response Count
Yes	55.6%	25
No	44.4%	20

45 people answered this question.

This has been a recognized area of opportunity. SNCS provides educational resources for parents and providers alike through a highly educated and experienced team of child development specialists. The new web site is a fast and easy way to find out about the many facets of our programs and how a focus on early childhood development is part of all that we do. Opportunities to learn from SNCS early childhood development team include:

- **New Family Post**
- **Provider Notes**
- **Parent Newsletters**
- **Bucket of Books program**
- **Second Step program**
- **Positive Parenting classes**
- **Tots and Twos program**
- **P.L.A.Y. (Parents/Providers Learning Activities Year-round) program**

**9. I have seen, heard, and/or experienced that SNCS and its representatives:**

Answer Options	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A	Rating Average
Make communication and support of early childhood development initiatives a priority.	5	5	25	6	3	2.78
Actively listen and encourage ideas from others.	4	9	20	10	0	2.84
Respond appropriately to inquiries and requests, making it easy to do business with SNCS.	5	10	17	9	0	2.73

45 people answered this question.

Throughout 2008-09, SNCS web site has included an **online survey to the public** regarding its programs, staff, administration and customer service. Questions are geared to parents and caregivers who use SNCS services and include questions such as “The SNCS staff provides me with helpful answers regarding my child’s development” and “I feel that I am treated with respect and that staff is generous with their time”. Responses have been overwhelmingly positive.

**10. I have seen, heard, and/or experienced that SNCS and its representatives:**

Answer Options	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A	Rating Average
Have the appropriate measurements in place to assess the effectiveness of its programs.	1	9	11	3	16	2.67
Demonstrate accountability for utilizing funding dollars to achieve program outcomes.	3	8	10	2	16	2.48

41 people answered this question.

Program evaluation with the use of measurable outcomes and tracking mechanisms is an ongoing agency focus and priority. The website’s “financial” page includes records that further agency transparency in this area.

**11. If SNCS were operating at its "peak" as a community resource, what would the agency do differently or better? (check all that apply)**

Answer Options	Response Frequency	Response Count
Reach all families, instead of primarily low-income families.	60.5%	23
Interact equally with all child care facilities (i.e., childcare centers, family childcare homes, licensed exempt providers).	60.5%	23
Reach families with adolescents.	34.2%	13
Build and monitor program accountability through an effective parent leadership council.	47.4%	18
Make staff development a greater priority.	31.6%	12

38 people answered this question.

SNCS’ **Parent Leadership Council** has been active since Fall 2008 and continues to grow in helping to align agency programs with parent needs.

SNCS’ **Program Committee**, which consists of both Board members and community members, was established in June 2007 to provide an ongoing review of agency programs and to assist in monitoring program accountability and establishing/maintaining performance standards.

**12. In the past year, what do you feel SNCS did well? (check all that apply)**

Answer Options	Response Frequency	Response Count
Worked towards building/establishing trust	50.0%	16
Showed integrity	59.4%	19
Enhanced communication	56.3%	18
Focused on building collaborative partnerships	56.3%	18
Demonstrated authenticity in relationships	50.0%	16
Demonstrated honesty and sincerity in relationships	65.6%	21

32 people answered this question.

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**13. Going forward, what could SNCS do better? (check all that apply)**

Answer Options	Response Frequency	Response Count
Building/establishing trust	44.4%	12
Exhibiting integrity	44.4%	12
Enhancing communication	81.5%	22
Building collaborative partnerships	66.7%	18
Demonstrating authenticity in relationships	33.3%	9
Demonstrating honesty and sincerity in relationships	37.0%	10

27 people answered this question.

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Thank you for taking the time to review these survey results. We are committed to continual improvement of our programs, and community feedback is critical to our success. We look forward to repeating this survey again in late 2009!



**MISSION STATEMENT (Adopted May 20, 2009)**

*Sierra Nevada Children's Services enriches the community by supporting quality child care and empowering families to achieve lifelong success.*

**VALUES**

- Integrity
- Compassion
- Respect
- Positive Attitude
- Communication
- Accomplishment