



Kaleidoscope Play & Learn

Washington State 2023 Report

Program Summary

2023 was a year of transition and growth for the Kaleidoscope Play & Learn program in Washington State. By mid-year, all Kaleidoscope groups were once again meeting in-person after meeting virtually in a multitude of formats since the beginning of the pandemic in 2020. It took some time for groups to find low/no-cost in-person locations, to develop cleaning and sanitizing practices, and to provide support to families to attend after years of caution of being in gatherings with others.

We experienced slow and steady growth in the program, adding new affiliates, new groups, and new participating families to our network. The groups addressed community and family concerns about the impact on children's development and school-readiness and on children's and caregivers' mental health. Groups continued to play a pivotal role in connecting families to community programs and services focused on financial and material support and on physical and emotional well-being.

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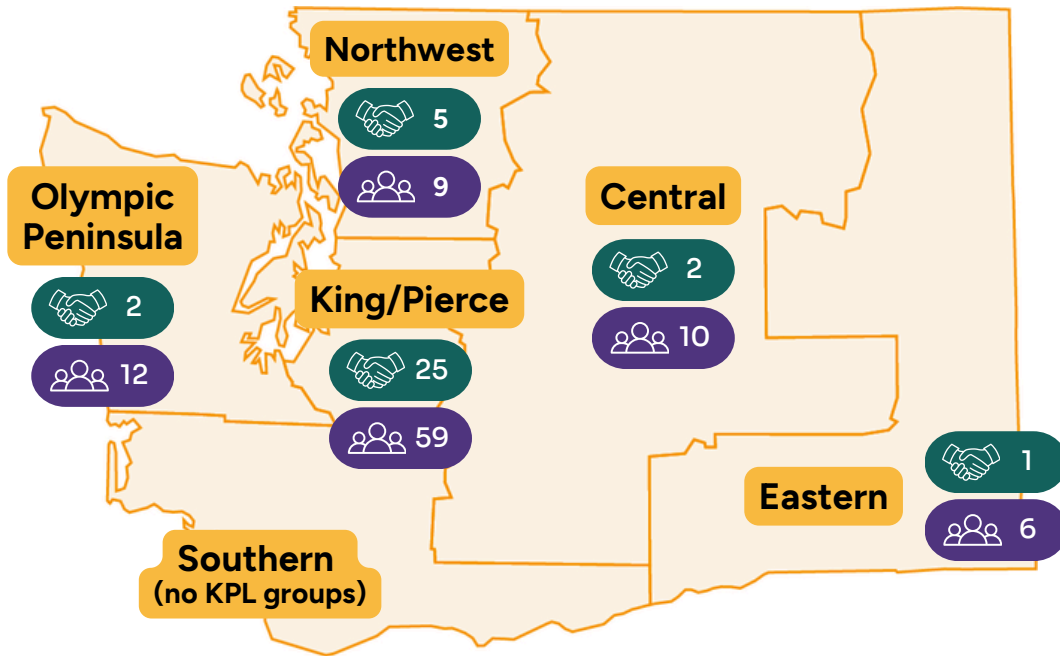
KPL Groups in CCA of WA Regions



Total Affiliates: 35



Total Weekly Groups: 96



2023 Attendance (by Region & Participants)

Region	# of FFN Caregivers	# of Parents	#of Children	Total # of Participants
King/Pierce	793	2034	3129	5956
Central	33	138	184	355
Northwest	157	748	920	1825
Olympic Peninsula	167	715	1022	1904
Eastern	17	97	101	215
<i>Total</i>	1167	3732	5356	10255



Language Data

Groups were facilitated in 17 languages (including English)

58% of groups were facilitated in languages other than English

Spanish - 16.5%

Chinese - 5.7%

Other - 20.2%

Participants spoke 24 languages at home

English - 56.6%

BrightSpark also partnered with 45 organizations in 7 additional states to bring Kaleidoscope Play & Learn to their local communities.

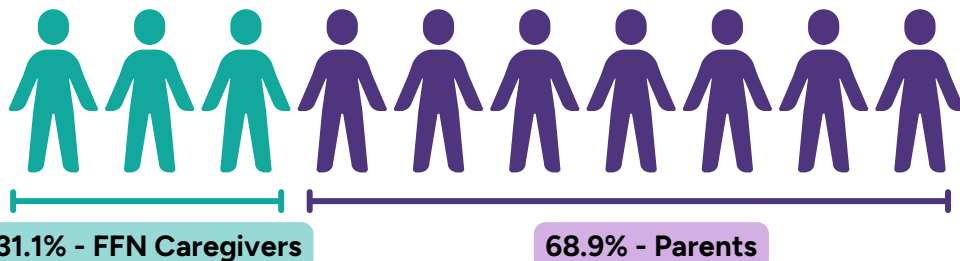
The largest concentration of Kaleidoscope affiliates (30) and groups (61) outside of Washington was in North Carolina, where local communities could chose to use state public early learning funds to implement Kaleidoscope Play & Learn.



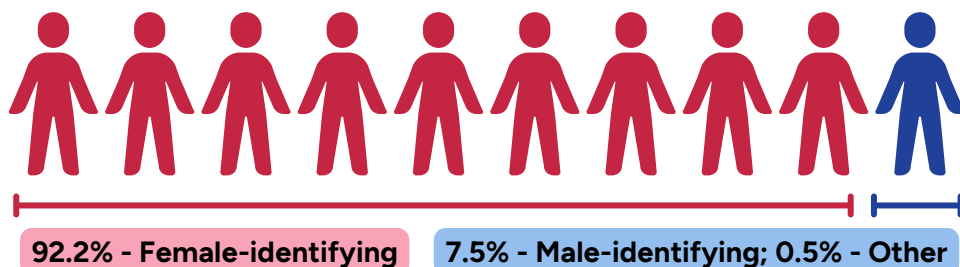
Participant Data

We collected information about Kaleidoscope participants through our annual, point-in-time Caregiver Outcomes Survey completed by caregivers and parents. (The number of participant responses varied by question, but averaged at 363.)

Participant -Child Relationships



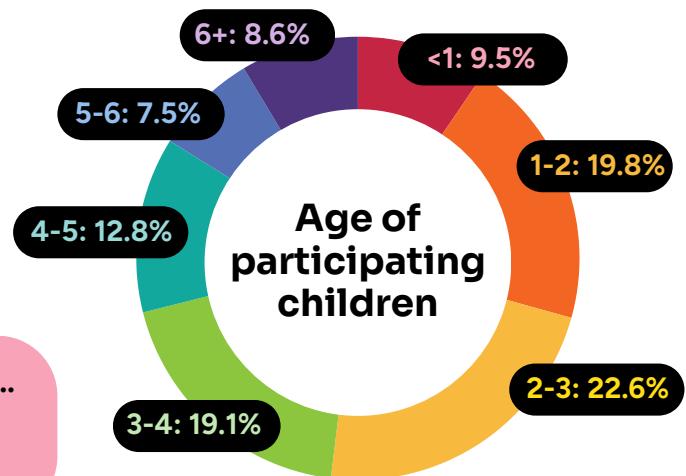
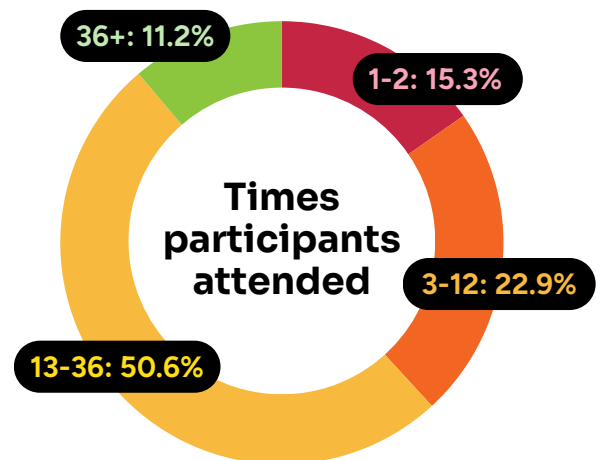
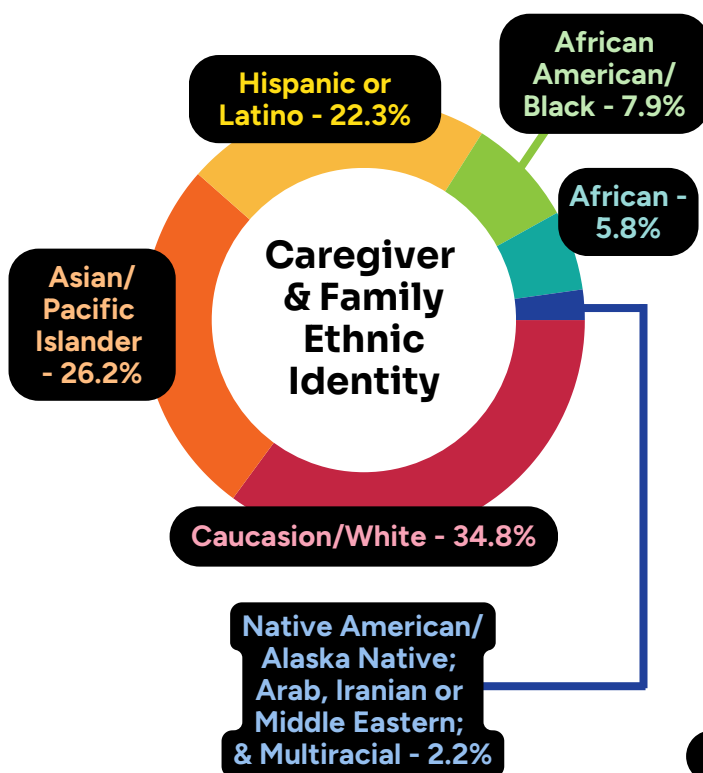
Caregiver & Parent Gender Identity





An FFN caregiver and child read a book together at a WA Kaleidoscope meetup.

Additional Data



Of the participating families & caregivers...

- 19.5% care for children with special needs
- 4.2% receive the WCCC subsidy





Survey Feedback

Following are the results of the annual Caregiver Outcomes Survey of questions related to changes in caregivers' and parents' knowledge, behavior, and social support network. 311 adult participants completed this section of the survey.

Question	About the same	A little more	A lot more
I understand that children develop school-readiness skills when they play.	23%	31%	46%
I understand the role I have in helping the child in my care be ready for kindergarten.	22%	32%	46%
I understand what to expect from children at different ages.	15%	35%	49%
I understand the importance of having a nurturing relationship with the child in my care.	25%	23%	52%
I describe things we do and see to the child in my care.	19%	27%	54%
I talk about numbers, shapes, and sizes with the child in my care.	19%	28%	52%
I read, look at books, or tell stories with the child in my care.	28%	24%	48%
I give the child in my care opportunities to learn and try new things.	14%	27%	59%
I encourage the child in my care to keep trying even when it seems hard.	18%	30%	52%
I notice times to help the child in my care learn throughout the day.	18%	30%	52%



Question	About the same	A little more	A lot more
I talk to or share ideas about caring for children with another adult.	16%	34%	50%
I feel supported as a parent or caregiver in my community.	12%	28%	60%
I understand that through play, children develop skills that prepare them for school.	22%	23%	55%
I talk to the child in my care about their feelings.	24%	24%	52%
I use community activities or services to help the child in my care learn and be healthy.	15%	33%	52%

98% of participants said they would recommend Kaleidoscope to another person caring for young children.

A child in a purple jacket shows off their hula-hooping skills.



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Participant Testimonies

Most program evaluations have open-ended questions where participants can write their responses in their own words. Common practice in program evaluation reports is to include just a few quotes from those written responses. We appreciate that so many caregivers and parents took the time to share their experiences, so we're including more than just a few quotes. We all benefit from hearing directly from caregivers and parents about their experiences and the nuances that come when they speak from their head and their heart. We are honored and grateful to share time and learn from and with them.

Question #1: What are 2-3 things you do differently as a parent or caregiver with the child in your care since participating in KP&L?

Creating a supportive community with other families:

- I also have found common ground with other parents, and experienced relief when the issues we were experiencing were not unique to us.
- Exchanging ideas with other adults.*
- I've learned how to ask for help and support as a parent when I'm needing it rather than try and handle it all myself or act like everything is fine.
- Feeling more supported as a parent helps me to feel calmer and less overwhelmed at home.
- I am open to sharing more, I noticed the benefit and I get more support from other parents and [facilitator] shares resources with me.
- Talk more openly with other parents/adults about child development
- [The group] gives us a place to learn how to play with other kids and for me to socialize with other moms. It's been really great for our mental health
- Have play dates with other children from the group
- Explore more community activities and opportunities for my child. Go to the library more often

Self-reflections leading to more intentional relationships with children:

- I am very intentional about having my granddaughter help clean up. I think it's great to be consistent about this and [facilitator] helped me figure out how. I give more heads up about transitions.
- Allowing them more time to try and solve problems on their own vs me solving for them. I also allow more room for boredom now, giving opportunities to play more creatively
- I tried to take things slower and explain everything to my daughter. I'm working on helping my daughter express her emotions and understanding on why she feels the way she does.
- I have more patience with my child.*
- Listen to her more closely Always make sure that she knows that her voice is important
- I started learning through play with my child. I can handle my child's tantrums better.
- I understand my son's emotions better
- I don't look at my cell phone as often. More present.
- I have remembered the "reframing negative behaviors as positive ones" talk; ie, instead of my child being shy, she is an observer first.
- Let them be when they're fully engaged in their own thing.



New perspectives on children's development:

- I understand that a community is very important for babies.*
- Children develop at different speeds, they all come out ok and we as parents need to learn to stop worrying. Children learn by playing not being told.
- I learn that my daughter has abilities that I did not know at her age.*
- I have a better understanding of my child's development corresponding to other children's; this allows me to curtail expectations and step back so she can figure out who she is on her own.

Supporting children's learning everywhere:

- I am able to help my children more in the learning process. I am able to use the tools I learn in play & learn in different life situations.
- I try to recognize learning opportunities while we are out in the world. I keep up a steady stream of communication.
- Noticing what toys he gravitates toward and encouraging similar types of play at home. Making tummy time more fun at home by using new toys and playing music.
- We have learned some new and fun things to do with things we have around the house. We've also learned new songs to sing together at home and in the car.
- We read more and pretend play together more
- Sometimes when I read a book to the little ones I only describe the photo, like what is happening or what they are doing. I ask them what they think is happening.*
- I find ways to teach the kids even when I'm doing chores or any other household work.
- Going more outdoors. Using what nature provides naturally as a source of fun and learning Using the weather in our favor to have fun.
- Talk about feelings and ways to manage big feelings and look for more opportunities to talk about concepts in play.
- Talk more about feelings, numbers, letters.
- Sometimes my preschooler and I set up [the group at home] with different learning/activity/play stations around the house. She loves to help me set them up, and then guide me through the activities, pretending that she is the parent and I am the child.
- I have become more comfortable with letting messy, unstructured play happen and appreciate it.
- Messy play even if it makes me cringe. Let them try unlimited amounts of times
- There are so many different ways/styles/techniques to help a child learn.

Question #2: Please tell us about what skills your child has gained as a result of participating in Play & Learn.

Being part of a loving community

- She has learned so much from watching and interacting with other children and adults. People in the program are so kind to her and I think this promotes her being kind.
- He is relating to his peers and treating them more gently -- because caregivers are always right near by -- giving guidance and suggestions.
- Classroom experience. Experience working with a teacher, and even cleaning up afterwards. He's been very shy, so the social aspect is great for him too. He feels comfortable in this setting.
- Learned a lot from [the facilitator] and other parents
- My children gets excited to come to the group and plays with other children.
- He's learned empathy.
- Socially they have learned that we are all different and we must understand respect and be patient with others.



Developing socially

- The kid I'm taking care of is very shy. Bringing him to the Kaleidoscope had helped them to be more open to new people and to share.
- Sharing with other children, taking turns*
- My daughter has learned to be with other children her age, share and participate in the community.*
- Building her brave muscle in playing around other people.
- My child is interested in telling stories to his friends and listening to his friends.**
- The children socialize more with other children and share the toys more often.*
- The child I care for is extremely reserved. It's good for him to be in a room with other children whom he may approach very gradually.
- She is better able to follow directions from the facilitators. She is able to play alongside other kids without using her body to communicate - meaning less hitting and shoving and throwing.
- Asking other kids to play, Asking for materials, More comfortable in larger settings
- Social emotional skills from groups like this are so amazing!
- Team working with peers, conflict resolution
- She has learned to be much more polite and is becoming more willing to share toys and play alongside and with other children. She has also matured, with her bravery becoming stronger and anxiety less.
- My child has grown a tremendous amount socially/emotionally throughout this year. She's gained so much confidence in being around others and she's learned so much better how to transition from one activity to another. She's also grown so much in her language development from being around other kids.

Building self-confidence & trying new things

- The joy to learn
- Confidence, teamwork
- She is more willing to try new things.
- He has developed more physical confidence, as well as gained a safe community to be a part of with other adults he recognizes and sees as "safe."
- She is not afraid to try new skills.
- Healthy risk taking, creativity
- They are happy!
- Seeing other kids walk, run, play helps him learn
- Love to learn & explore
- My daughter is always drawn to the art stations, where she has learned to use a number of new medium that we don't have at home. She is so proud of the art she brings home.
- Confidence, speaking up, sharing with others, more curiosity and connecting with others
- More independent and having more fun exploring

Learning new skills

- Better hand eye coordination 2. Better socialization 3. She is better prepared for school
- Clean, organize, listen, sing*
- Use scissors and sing
- Independent play (where I am observing her from distance). Puzzles. She had never tried the puzzles before play and learn and now she is doing those independently!
- Draw and tell stories**
- She is starting to read! She loves pretend plays and dress up
- They've learned a lot. The lesson they learned help other children learn as well.
- Speaking



Learning new skills (cont'd)

- He uses his imagination a lot more*
- Making a lot of progress in starting to walk.
- large and fine motor skills, names and facts about plants, animals and insects, problem solving
- Sitting down for circle time a lot longer
- She has learned to talk a lot more fluently and do many activities independently.
- Recognizes numbers and his name.*
- He has developed emotionally and physically.*
- Practice Spanish. She has learned new things and puts them into practice at home. She has brothers and when she comes home, she tells them what she learned at Play & Learn.*

**translated from Spanish*

***translated from Vietnamese*

Learn more!

In Washington State, over 70% of children rely on Family, Friend, and Neighbor Caregivers. BrightSpark Early Learning Services is committed to supporting these caregivers and the children they support through outreach, education, and resource navigation assistance. For more information about our FFN programs, visit our website or contact us!

If you are as excited about Kaleidoscope Play & Learn as we are, we'd love to hear from you! We can help you find or even create a Kaleidoscope group in your community.

