



Florida Department of Health 2026 Part C Early Steps Family Survey Program Report Guide: Southwest Florida Early Steps



Summary

The 2026 Part C Early Steps Family Survey Program Report summarizes this year's results for Southwest Florida Early Steps. This report contains an overview of the data collected from families participating in Part C who responded to surveys distributed by your Early Steps program. The survey was distributed in an effort to collect data for the State Performance Plan's Indicator #4: Family Outcomes. Indicator #4 pertains to the percent of families participating in Part C who report that early intervention services have helped the family: a) know their rights; b) effectively communicate their children's needs; and c) help their children develop and learn.

For this year's survey administration, paper surveys were distributed across 15 Local Early Steps (LES) programs. Families were also given the option of completing an online version of the survey. Of the 2,586 families who were eligible to receive a survey across the state, a total of 1,461 surveys were returned, equating to an overall return rate of 56.5% (1,461/2,586). Surveys were distributed to families between mid-January and May 1, 2026.

Of the 44 surveys returned for Southwest Florida Early Steps, all families submitted online surveys. Each family was asked to report where the survey was completed. For Southwest Florida Early Steps, most surveys were completed in the home (91%) or in the community (5%).

Interpreting Your Report

Overview (p.1)

The "Overview" section of the program report contains information about the total number of families who were eligible to receive a survey, the number of survey respondents, and the return rate for your program. The state's overall figures have been included in this section for comparison purposes. A degree of caution should be exercised when interpreting the survey results. For example, 67% (N=10) of programs had fewer than 100 surveys returned. As a consequence, for some programs, the completed sample sizes may be insufficient for their survey results to be interpreted with a high degree of confidence at the program level.

The table below illustrates the number of returned surveys (or completed sample size) required for five varying population sizes to have a high level of confidence in the data (at a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error).

Population Size	Number of Returned Surveys Required
100	80
250	152
500	217
1,000	278
10,000	370

A program, for example, with a population of 100 families receiving early intervention services would require 80 returned surveys to get results that reflect the target population as closely as possible (i.e., a high degree of confidence). If 75% of the respondents indicated a strong level of satisfaction for a specific item, then there would be a high degree of certainty (95% certain) that if the entire relevant population had responded to this item, between 70% and 80% would have also had strong levels of satisfaction. If, on the other hand, this same program only had a completed sample size of 30, then the margin of error would increase significantly to 13%. Thus, if 75% of respondents indicated a strong level of satisfaction for the very same item, then if the entire relevant population responded, it would be much harder to predict the outcome since the margin of error is much greater (62% to 88%). For more information about sample sizes, please visit the following website: Sample-Size.net/Confidence-Interval-Proportion.

Part C Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) Indicator #4 (p.1)

The standards set for each of the elements of SPP/APR Indicator #4 are outlined below:

Indicator #4a: Percent of families participating in Part C who report that early intervention services have helped the family know their rights.

Standard: **Item #19:** “Over the past year, Early Steps services have helped me and/or my family, know about my child’s and family’s rights concerning Early Steps services.”

Indicator #4b: Percent of families participating in Part C who report that early intervention services have helped the family effectively communicate their children’s needs.

Standard: **Item #17:** “Over the past year, Early Steps services have helped me and/or my family, communicate more effectively with the people who work with my child and family.”

Indicator #4c: Percent of families participating in Part C who report that early intervention services have helped the family help their children develop and learn.

Standard: **Item #21:** “Over the past year, Early Steps services have helped me and/or my family, understand my child’s special needs.”

This year’s FDOH-established targets for the three Indicator #4 sub-indicators 4a, 4b, and 4c are reflected in Florida’s State Performance Plan (SPP), and are as follows: 4a = **89.5%**, 4b = **84.6%**, and 4c = **94.4%**. The LES and overall state percentages are also included for comparison purposes. Again, please keep in mind that the number of respondents plays a significant role in interpreting your results. The percentages reported for programs with low numbers of returns are likely to have higher standard errors from the mean and thus their results may not be a good representation of these programs’ population’s views.

Child Demographics (p.1)

For programs with 10 or more returned surveys, child demographic information provided by respondents has been included in the report. The three demographic items are Race/Ethnicity, Gender, and Child Ever Enrolled in Medicaid. For each of these items, the report contains the number as well as the percentage of surveys returned by response option (e.g., Male, Female, or Unknown for results by gender). Please keep in mind that these percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole number; therefore, results may not add to 100%. The report also includes pie/bar charts to help illustrate your program’s child demographic data based on families who returned the surveys. In order to protect family confidentiality, demographic data are not reported where there were less than 10 respondents.

Item Rankings (p. 2)

All twenty-two items from the “Impact of Early Steps Services on Your Family” scale were ranked based on calculated means. For each survey item, a mean score between 1 and 6 was calculated across respondents answering the item. Scores were calculated by summing the response choices, which range from 1 to 6 (1 = Very Strongly Disagree to 6 = Very Strongly Agree), for each item and dividing by the number of responses to the item, thus calculating a mean score for each item. A mean score of 5 or above translates to respondents reporting a strong level of endorsement to the item. For each item listed, the item number is noted for ease of reference. The items showing the highest levels of family endorsement are located at the top of the table, and those with the lowest levels of endorsement can be found toward the bottom.

Program Impact and Next Steps

The reports are intended to share important feedback regarding which families responded to the survey and the extent to which they agreed that the early intervention services provided by Southwest Florida Early Steps from June 2025 to May 2026 helped them in three key areas. Overall return rates should be used to gauge whether or not the number of respondents participating in the survey is sufficient for capturing a representative view of parent perceptions in your program. Low return rates may indicate a need for implementation of pre-distribution notices or follow-up activities during the next round of survey distribution (for example, reminder emails could be sent to parents one week after surveys have been distributed). If child demographic data have been included in your report, this information can be compared to your program’s child count figures in specific ethnicity or gender groups to determine if results are representative of the population in your program.

The Part C OSEP Indicator #4 percentages located on the report’s first page provide a snapshot of how your program compares with the overall state results for Indicator #4 (sections a, b, and c). When program scale percentages are lower than state percentages, these may be indicators of areas in need of improvement within your program. However, if program percentages are higher than the state’s overall percentages, this does not automatically indicate that these areas are performing adequately.

For more details regarding areas of strength and weakness in your program, refer to the “Item Ranking” section. The item rankings pinpoint specific areas that are performing best within your program as well as areas that may require more attention. This information may be used to address areas in need of attention in hopes of improving services for families participating in Part C and receiving Early Steps services in your program.



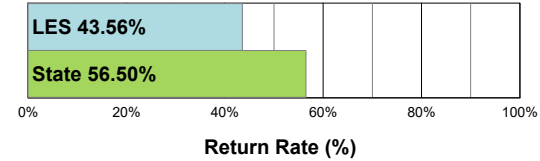
Florida Department of Health 2026 Part C Family Survey Report

Southwest Florida Early Steps



Overview

	LES	State
Number of Families Eligible to Receive a Survey	101	2,586
Number of Survey Respondents	44	1,461
Return Rate	43.56%	56.50%

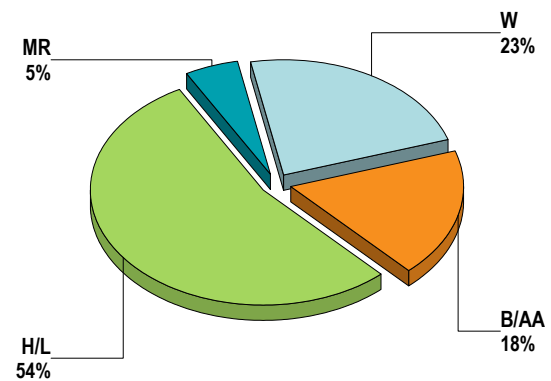


Part C OSEP Indicator #4

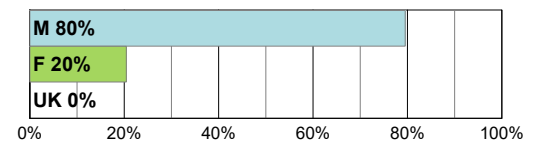
Percent of families participating in Part C who report that early intervention services have helped the family:	LES % Agree	State % Agree	State Target
A. Know their rights	75.0%	78.2%	89.5%
B. Effectively communicate their children's needs	75.0%	73.8%	84.6%
C. Help their children develop and learn	84.1%	89.6%	94.4%

Child Demographics*

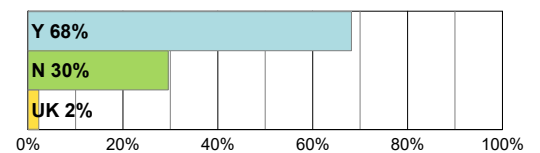
Race/Ethnicity	Count	Percent†
American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN)	0	0%
Asian (AS)	0	0%
Black/African American (B/AA)	8	18%
Hispanic/Latino (H/L)	24	54%
Multi-racial (MR)	2	5%
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander (NH/PI)	0	0%
White (W)	10	23%
Unknown (UK)	0	0%



Gender	Count	Percent†
Male (M)	35	80%
Female (F)	9	20%
Unknown (UK)	0	0%



Child Ever Enrolled in Medicaid	Count	Percent†
Yes (Y)	30	68%
No (N)	13	30%
Unknown (UK)	1	2%



*Demographic data are not reported when there are less than 10 respondents.
†Percentages have been rounded and as a result may not add to exactly 100%.

Southwest Florida Early Steps

2026 Family Survey - Item Ranking

Items Ranked by Mean‡ - Strongest to Least Satisfaction

Item #	Item	LES	State
	<i>Over the past year, Early Steps services have helped me and/or my family:</i>		
20	- do things with and for my child that are good for my child's development.	5.25	5.05
11	- do activities that are good for my child even in times of stress.	5.18	4.93
13	- understand how the Early Steps system works.	5.18	4.93
22	- feel that my efforts are helping my child.	5.16	5.06
12	- feel that I can get the services and supports that my child and family need.	5.11	4.93
7	- feel more confident in my skills as a parent.	5.09	4.96
14	- be able to evaluate how much progress my child is making.	5.09	5.00
15	- feel that my child will be accepted and welcomed in the community.	5.09	4.97
21	- understand my child's special needs.	5.09	5.03
6	- get the services that my child and family need.	5.07	5.00
9	- make changes in family routines that will benefit my child with special needs.	5.07	4.93
4	- know where to go for support to meet my child's needs.	5.05	4.93
16	- feel that my family will be accepted and welcomed in the community.	5.05	4.96
17	- communicate more effectively with the people who work with my child and family.	5.05	4.96
18	- understand the roles of the people who work with my child and family.	5.05	4.94
19	- know about my child's and family's rights concerning Early Steps services.	5.05	4.94
10	- be more effective in managing my child's behavior.	5.02	4.90
3	- improve my family's quality of life.	5.00	4.94
5	- know where to go for support to meet my family's needs.	4.98	4.84
2	- know about services in the community.	4.86	4.79
8	- keep up with friendships for my child and family.	4.86	4.71
1	- participate in typical activities for children and families in my community.	4.80	4.77

For questions regarding your results, please contact:

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To view Florida's Part C State Performance Plan, please visit the following Web link:

FloridaEarlySteps.com/Early-Steps-Performance-and-Accountability/

‡Mean scores range between 1 and 6.