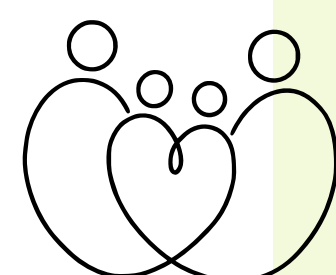


# Needs and Aspirations of Caregivers for Children with Developmental Needs

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## Overview

- A needs analysis was piloted with 45 caregivers at a THK EIPIIC centre to understand their lived experiences and translate these insights into actionable outcomes for caregiver support services.
- Key parenting challenges included cost of additional services that would be beneficial to their child, managing their child's challenging behaviours, and having limited time to themselves.
- Requests for information about post-EIPIIC pathways and caregiver training were common.
- Caregivers hoped for their child to be independent, and for the family to be healthy and happy.

## Introduction

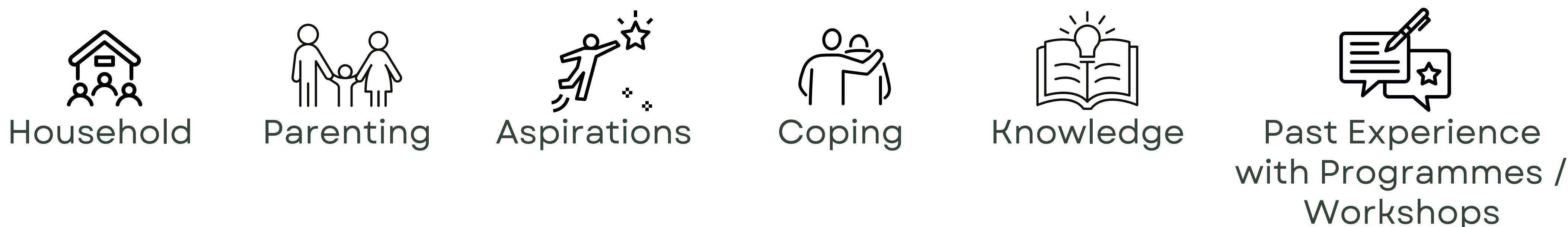
Caring for children with developmental needs is associated with greater caregiving burden. This group of caregivers generally tend to have poorer well-being (Masefield, et al., 2020). Their ability to cope depends on many factors, such as the amount of resources they have. Expectations towards their child and the family can also influence caregiver practice and engagement with support systems.

Caregivers' needs are constantly evolving, and their lived experiences can provide insights into how they find meaning in their caregiving journey.

Amidst a changing landscape and shifting societal dynamics, service providers have to be updated on what caregivers need so that services can remain relevant and beneficial to caregivers.

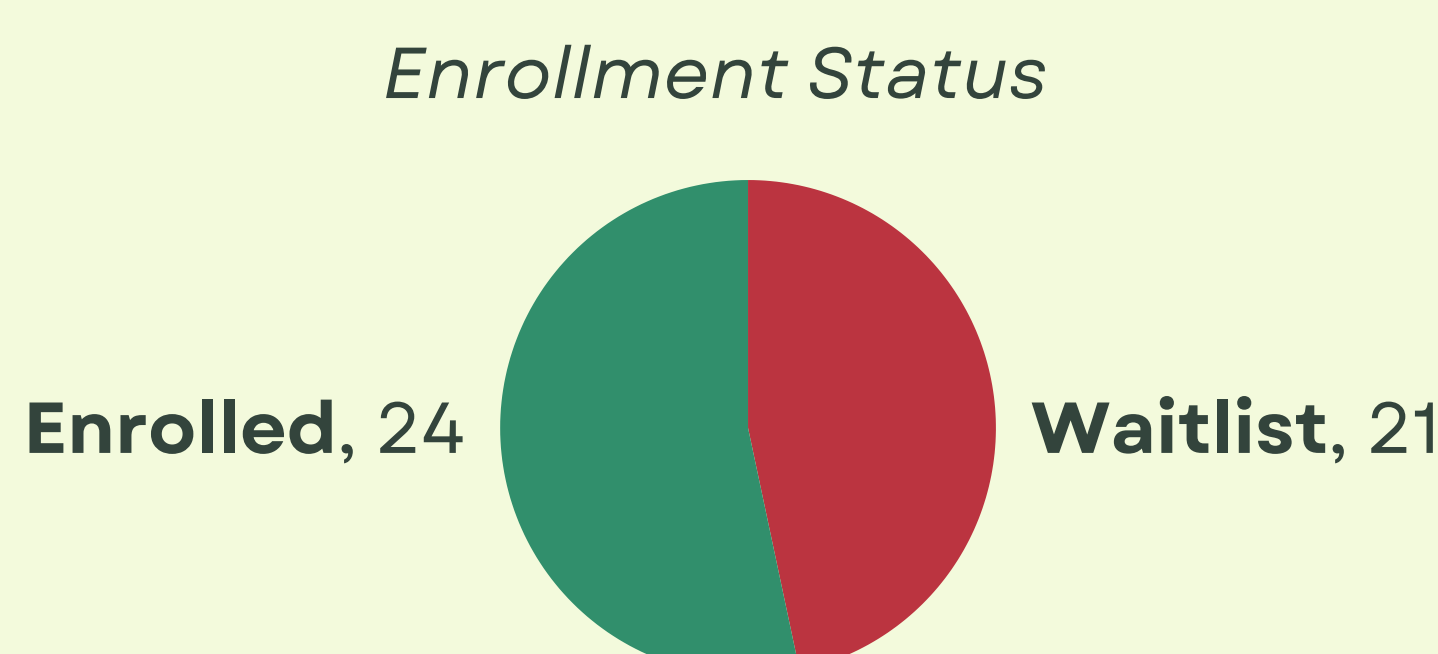
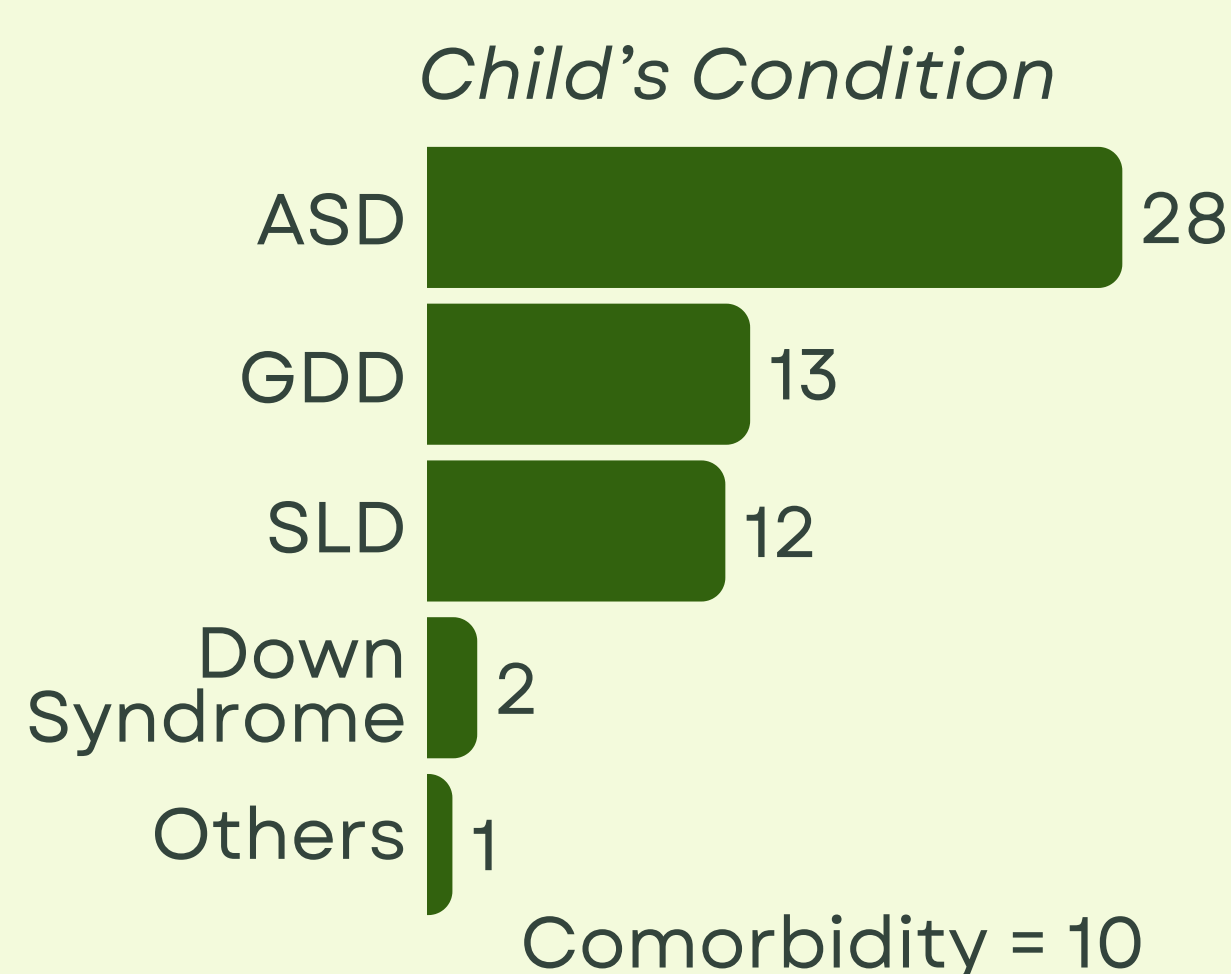
## Approach

- A comprehensive needs survey was developed by adapting from the RAPID Survey Project (Fisher, Liu, Carman, & Lombardi, 2023) and other questionnaires, spanning 40 questions across the following domains:



## Data Collection

45 caregivers (29 mothers, 15 fathers) responded to the survey online.



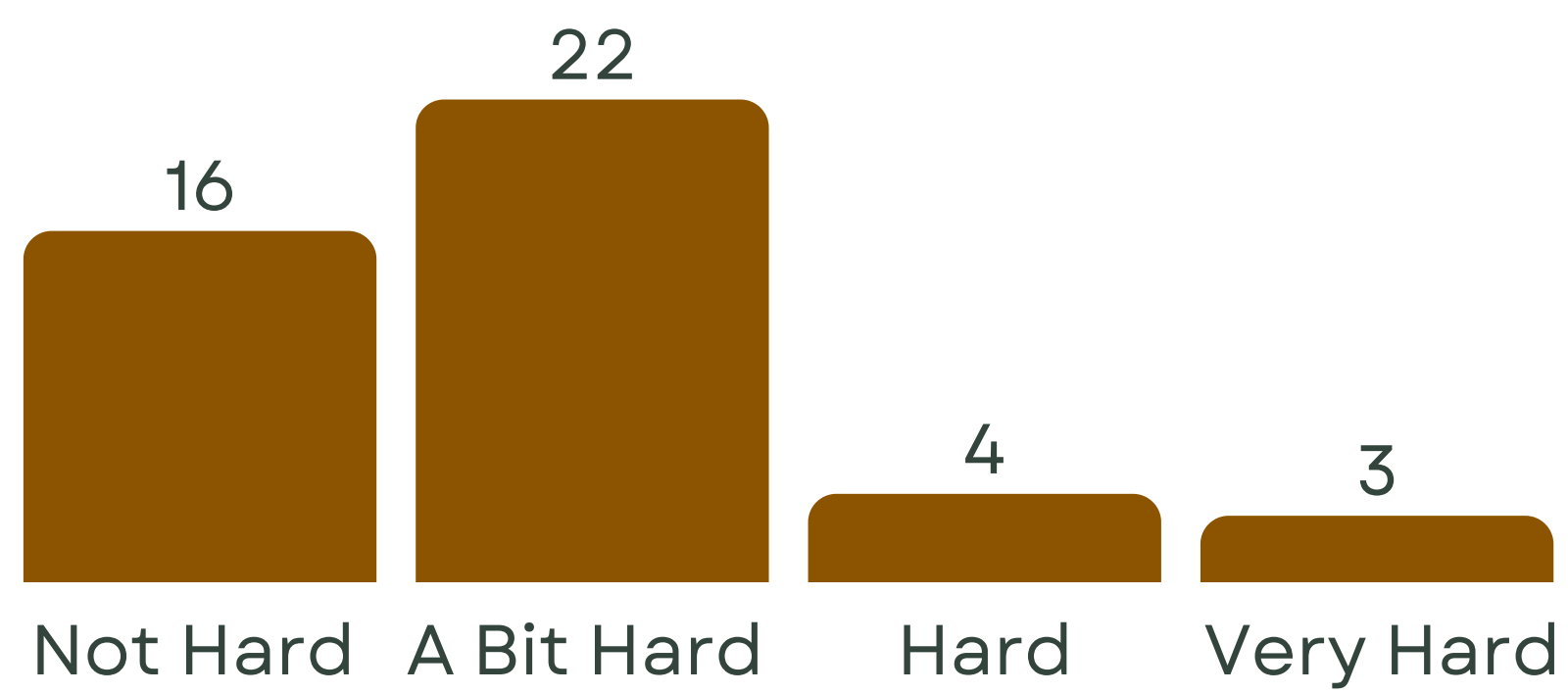
## References

Fisher, P., Liu, S., Carman, C., & Lombardi, J. (2023). The RAPID Survey: An Innovative Tool for Elevating Parent and Provider Voices in Early Childhood. *OSF*.

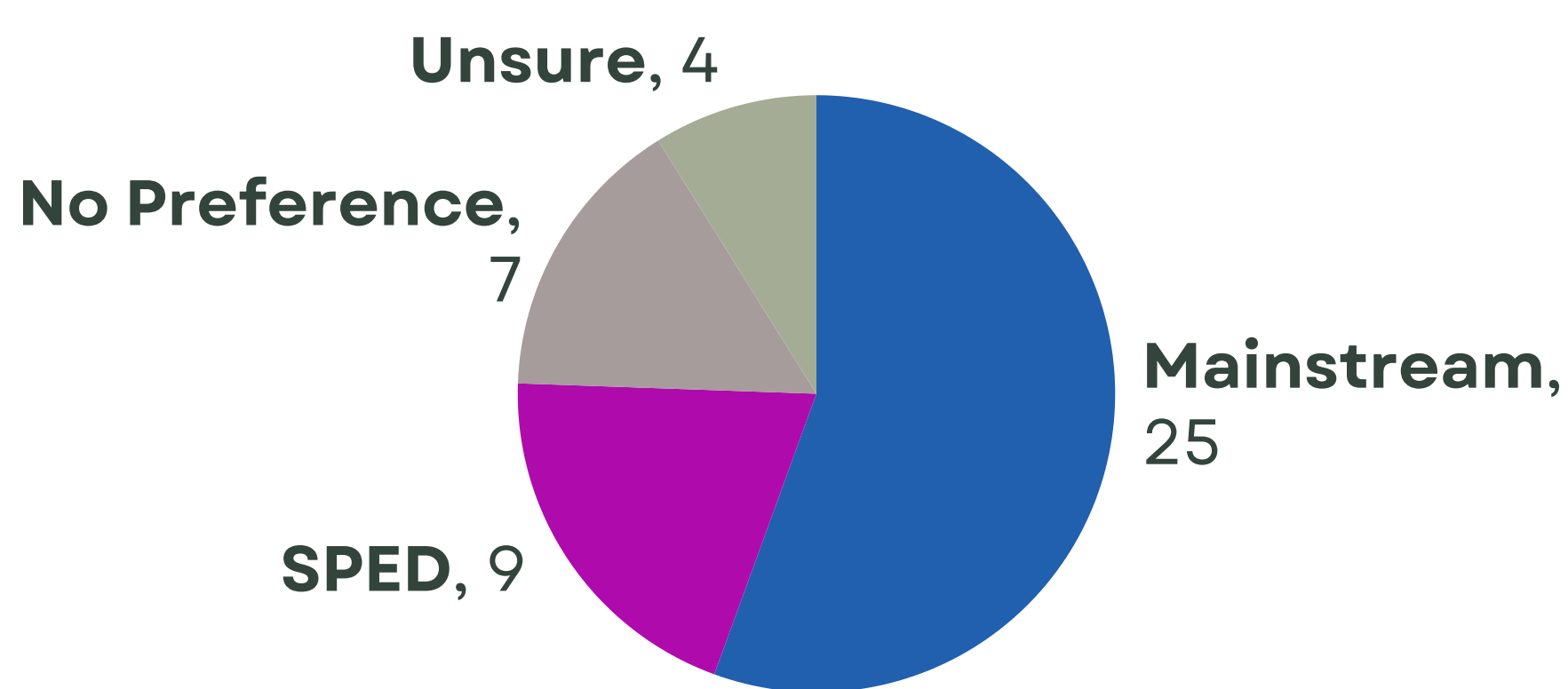
Masefield, S. C., Prady, S. L., Sheldon, T. A., Small, N., Jarvis, S., & Pickett, K. E. (2020). The caregiver health effects of caring for young children with developmental disabilities: A meta-analysis. *Maternal and Child Health Journal*, 24, 561-574.

## Results

*[Household] In the past 3 months, how hard has it been for you to pay for basic necessities such as food, housing, utilities, or medical care?*






*[Aspiration] What kind of school do you want for your child to enrol in after EIPIC?*



*[Coping] What is 1 change that you feel can improve your current situation, if any?*

“More effort, care and concern from my spouse. Not only in terms of support in caring for the children but also emotional support for me and my well-being.”

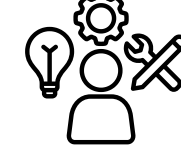


-  A more supportive spouse
-  More support for child's development
-  A new home / support with rental stress

*[Parenting] What challenges do you face as a parent, if any?*



*[Aspiration] What is your hope / goal for your child's future?*

“To be better and to improve more on himself. To hope that he'll have a better life without society judging him. To be able to make friends. There's too much to say. Mainly, we just want him to be who he truly is.”

-  For child to be independent and equipped with skills
-  For child to be healthy and grow up well
-  For child to learn well and enjoy learning

*[Knowledge] What kind of support would be helpful for you in journeying with your child?*



## Discussion

Our study shed light on how caregivers have been coping, and provide insights on how we can support them more effectively and holistically in their caregiving journey.

One area of need is the limited knowledge caregivers have about education pathways after EIPIC. Transition talks have been conducted regularly for graduating children to help caregivers better prepare for their child's primary education. Resources on education pathways post-EIPIC are also being developed to provide caregivers with more information. Helping to close this gap will allow caregivers to better plan for their child's future.

To further empower caregivers, a programme called *Time With Me* has been developed. It is a series of sessions conducted by early intervention professionals in the EIPIC centre where caregivers can learn and practice strategies to support their child's development. These include effective engagement skills (“Imitate, Model, Observe, Wait, Listen”) to tailoring appropriate support to the child (eg., prompting by verbal, gestures, or visuals). There are also self-care sessions by art and music therapists. *Time With Me* encourages quality time between caregiver and child, while bringing families together to learn from and support one another.

A caregiver portal, Empowered Learning Community (ELM), is currently in development. In ELM, caregivers will have access to a repertoire of resources and activities for use with their child across a range of routines, from cooking, arts and crafts, to physical exercises etc. There will also be workshops and live events where caregivers can attend to learn new knowledge from early intervention experts. Finally, caregivers are able to interact with other families through forums and build communities and support groups among themselves.

For early intervention providers, uplifting and empowering caregivers continue to be an important role, and improving caregivers' well-being can eventually contribute towards better children's outcomes.