



M'Lop Tapang's Community Education Center Baby Care Program Parent's Perspective Survey

'Phum Sam Bram' (Village 35) is a Sihanoukville slum neighborhood near the deep-sea port and train station. M'Lop Tapang established our [Community Education Center](#) in this neighborhood several years ago due to the substantial number of disadvantaged families living in poverty there. It is well known as an area with a high incidence of unemployment, gambling, alcohol and drug abuse. Our Community Education Center provides a variety of educational, recreational, and social services for Cambodian children and youth living in the local area. Housed in a large space at this Center is a Baby Care Program.



This community-based Baby Care Program is aimed at providing daycare services for young children of working parents. Parents with children in the program have most often found work in low-wage sectors such as manual laborers, cleaners, street sellers, or garbage pickers. In the past, many parents lacked secure childcare options. This lack often left them unable to find employment or earn an income. They were forced to leave their young children alone at home, in the care of older siblings, or, as with street workers, to bring their small children along with them.

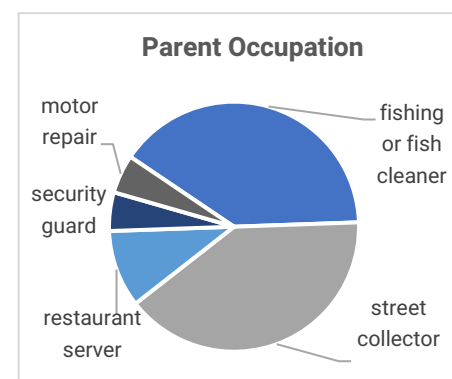
The Baby Care Program at *Phum Sam Bram* provides safe, secure daytime care, allowing parents to go to work and know that their children are being well taken care of. Parents can drop their children off early in the morning, for the full day, and collect them again in the late afternoon. Parents who enroll their children in the program pay a daily fee of 2000 Riel (USD 0.50) for the daycare service. Some parents may be unable to pay even this minimal cost, in which case our social workers will meet with them to further analyze the situation. No child is ever turned away because his or her parents cannot afford the childcare charge.

The daily activities in this Baby Care Program are designed to address each child's basic needs while also promoting healthy growth and development. The program provides supervision from well-trained and experienced staff, enhanced nutrition through carefully prepared meals, age-appropriate stimulation with games and play, hygiene care, regular medical check-ups and health care, and socialization with other children.

As with all MT programs, it is not only the children that our teams work with. Designated MT social workers also work and regularly follow up with the child's family to help the parents or caretakers resolve any other issues that may be impacting their child's development.

In November 2023 we completed individual interviews with 20 parents who have children enrolled in the center's Baby Care Program.

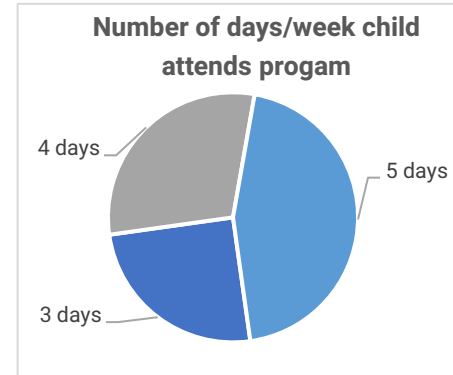
All the parents interviewed live in the local neighborhood. Being so close to the port, it is not surprising that many of the parents (40%) earn an income directly or indirectly in the fishing industry. A significant number (40%) reported their primary source of income generation as collecting recyclable items off the streets. **The average income reported by the parents interviewed was \$155 USD / month.**





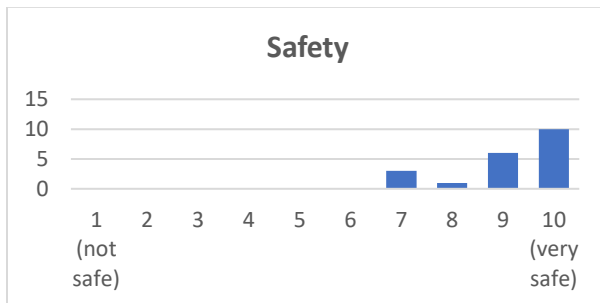
Each of these parents had one child attending the program (8 boys and 12 girls). The average age of the parent's children attending the Baby Care Program was 2.6 years old.

Some of the parents interviewed were new to the program (one had only been receiving services for six days) while others had known the program longer (the longest was 3 years). Almost half (45%) of the parents bring their child to the program 5 days/week.

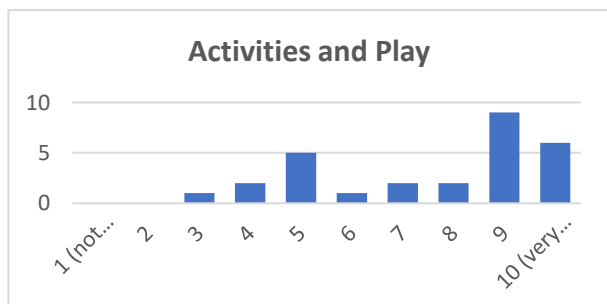


The series of questions we asked were basic and focused on common concerns that most parents have when choosing childcare options. For most of the questions, parents were asked to rate their replies on a scale of 1 - 10.

When asked about how safe they felt their child was when attending the Baby Care Program, the majority of parents responded that they considered it to be very safe. Similarly, when asked if they felt their child was getting enough to eat, most parents also responded positively.

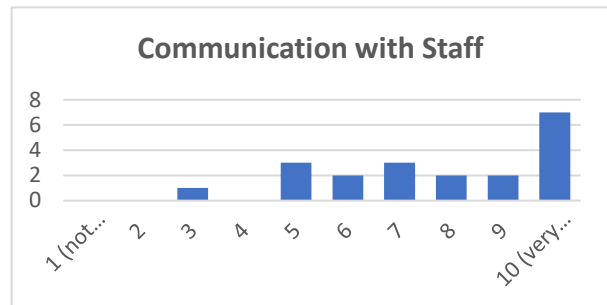
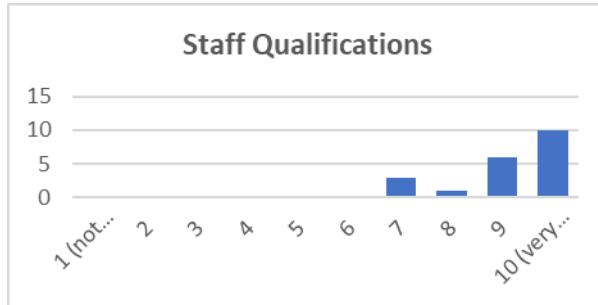


When asked if they thought their child was treated with kindness, patience, and respect, most of the responses were very positive. There were more mixed responses when asked if the activities and learning opportunities at the Baby Care Program are appropriate for the age of their child.

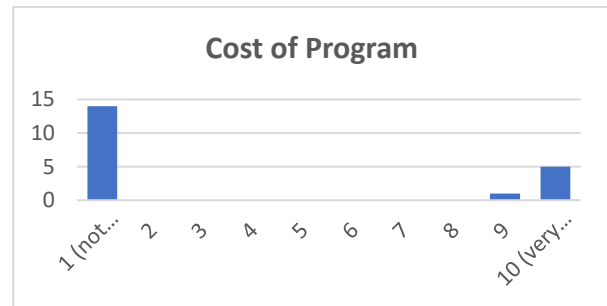
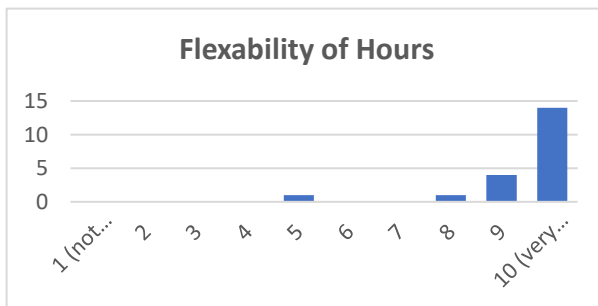




We also asked the parents how qualified they thought the staff at the Baby Care Program were and the responses were positive. When asked if they thought they had enough communication with staff, many parents replied that this could be better.



When asked if there was enough flexibility of hours in the program schedules, most parents responded that they thought there was. Parent responses were very divided when it came to the cost of the program. While the majority of parents responded that they did not think the program was expensive at all, there were several (30%) who thought the costs were very expensive. It should be noted that no child if ever refused service is parents can not pay.



It was very interesting when we asked the parents what they would do for childcare if MT's Baby Care Program was not available.

Half of those interviewed replied that they would need to take their child to their workplace or leave with an older sibling. Sadly, some of the parents replied that they would have to sometimes leave their little children alone.

OPTIONS FOR CHILDCARE IF THERE WAS NO MT BABY CARE PROGRAM	
	%
Take child to the workplace	50%
Leave child with an older sibling	50%
Pay neighbor to take care of child	40%
Sometimes leave child on their own	10%
Change jobs	10%
Stop working	10%



Summary /Recommendations:

The results of the survey indicated that most parents were satisfied with the services of the Baby Care Program. After reviewing the results with the Center Manager, it was decided to focus on improving two areas of the survey that had mixed responses.

Activities and Play:

- Staff will explain more clearly to parents when their child enters the program what are the daily activities that take place.
- Plan for a workshop/training for Baby Care staff on age-appropriate play activities

Communication between Staff and Parents:

- Explore the possibility of setting up a Telegram messaging group for parents of children in the program. This will depend on how many of them have access to suitable phones.
- Will ask each of the parents if they would like to schedule regular short one-on-one appointments with the staff for updates on their child. A short template can be developed easily to record the agenda/outcomes of the meetings and be placed in the child's chart.