

Port Washington Children's Center



Usability Moderated Testing Final Report

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Executive Summary

The goal of the Usability study was to discover problem areas that users could face while using the pwchildrenscenter.org website as well as uncover opportunities to aid in improving the user experience while they browse through the website.

We conducted eight remote user testing, from which the evaluators found a total of 3 unique problems. These problems are explained and recommendations are suggested to help improve or solve the issues identified.

Problem 1: Homepage-Mobile view

Despite the fact most users accessed the website using their mobile phones and used the homepage for high-level navigation (instead of using the navigation menu), the homepage was not well responsive for mobile use.

Solution: Introducing a search feature along with having the main Call-to-action buttons supported by text and visual for better understanding.

Problem 2: Donation-Payment

Inconsistent payment provisions and procedures, including the use of a third party service without warning, clearly designed pages, and a lack of multiple payment options on the PWCC website on, negatively impacting user trust, providers, and customer retention. A user-friendly and consistent payment system can, and is recommended do not address these issues.

Solution: To address payment design and method issues, it is recommended that PWCC create separate pages for tuition and donation payments that provide detailed information and a link to the external payment site, as well as include a pop-up warning sign that clearly states users will be redirected to an external payment site to increase user trust and enhance the user experience.

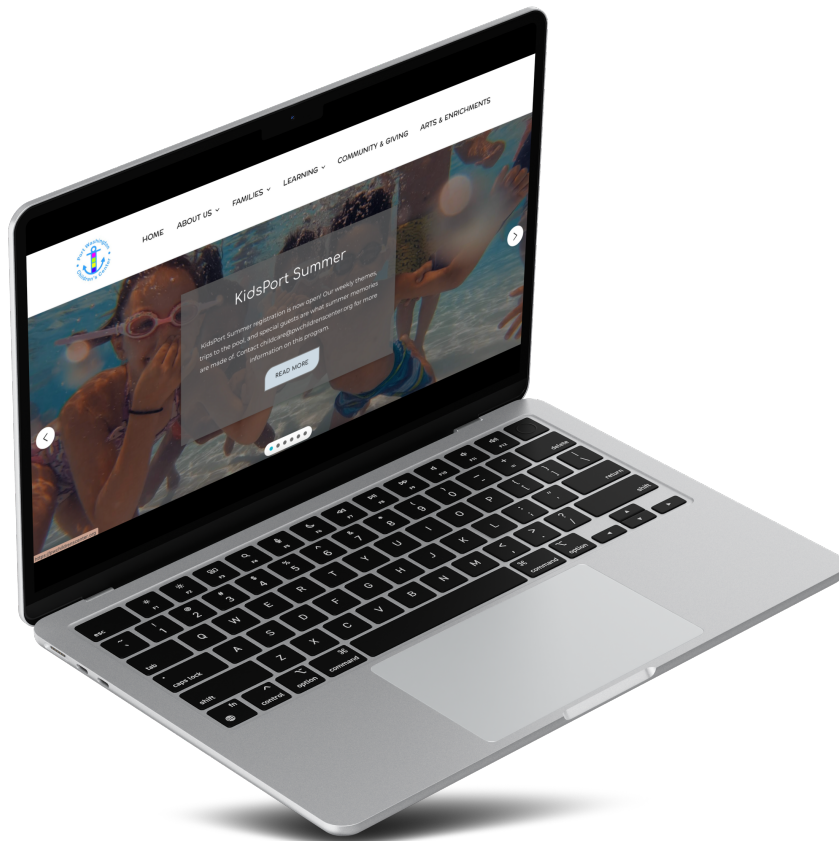
Problem 3: Program Enrollment

As the users tried to navigate to find the enrollment related documents, they were facing obstacles in identifying the right path.

Solution: Having clear CTAs within the specific program sections to allow the user to register for the programs will give them confidence in their actions.

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1. Introduction

The Port Washington Children's Center was established in 1977 as a non-profit and non-sectarian child care center. They provide quality childcare and educational programs for young children in the Port Washington, New York community.

The center offers a wide range of programs for children from toddlers of age of 18 months through the school-age of 12 years, including full-day childcare, preschool, and pre-kindergarten classes. With highly qualified staff members and teachers, they put a high priority on giving the kids a secure, nurturing, and exciting environment.

In order to better understand the user experience of the Port Washington Children's Center website, a usability testing study was conducted. The study included a diverse group of participants, including parents of children who currently attend the center, parents of children who have previously attended the center, and prospective parents who are considering enrolling their child at the center. The participants were asked to perform various tasks on the website, such as finding information about tuition fees, making a donation to the center and enrolling their kids.

2. Project Scope and Goals

Port Washington Children's Center (PWCC) approached our team with the goal of improving their website to suit their clients and attract potential donors. Some of the goals that the organization presented included: to get feedback on the design and content of the site, to keep the information concise and clear, and to identify ways to reduce bounce rates. As a target audience we have children living in Port Washington or a single parent who lives in the area, as well as we give priority to potential donors who live or formerly lived in Port Washington/Sandpoint.

To achieve these goals, we developed several research questions. First, our goal was to evaluate the ease of navigation of the website homepage and see if it directed users to relevant content correctly. Second, we analyzed the content of the 'Learning' section of the website and determined whether it provided clear and relevant information on the PWCC programs page. In addition, we aimed to determine the clarity of the registration process described on the website and whether users could easily follow it.

We also looked at the overall consistency of tone, wording and design of the website, as well as the effectiveness of the existing FAQ section in providing relevant information to users. Finally, we aimed to evaluate the website's ability to attract potential donors and contributions, and to determine the focus of first-time users when browsing the site on, and how easy it was to navigate and understand the information presented.

By answering these research questions, we can better understand the strengths and weaknesses of the current website, and identify opportunities for improvement that align with organizational goals. Additionally, by focusing on the target audience and potential contributors, we can develop strategies to increase engagement and reduce bounce rates on the site, and ultimately deliver a more successful and effective website for PWCC.

3. Methodology

For the methodology, the team conducted Moderated Remote Usability Testing with parents of PWCC's community and other parents residing in New York City. Remote moderated usability testing is a type of usability testing in which a moderator facilitates the testing process and guides the participants through the tasks, on an online video-conferencing platform. As a team we remotely conducted a total of 8 interviews over Zoom, which were conducted in pairs, taking turns to moderate and take notes. The usability test focused on 4 main tasks keeping in mind usability parameters such as website navigation, the clarity and tone of labels and content, readability of information, the use of imagery and other such visual design cues:

3.1 Tasks:

1. Using the Homepage
2. Enrolling their child in a program
3. Using FAQs to find information
4. Finding the mission statement

3.2 Recruitment

For the recruitment we narrowed down on a sample of 8 participants who were either parents of the PWCC community or parents residing in the United States. A Google form requesting for participants time and availability along with some additional information regarding the demographics (parents' age, age of child) was circulated to the mail list of PWCC parents and parents within our circles. The test guaranteed an Amazon Gift card which was offered upon completion of the test as an incentive. We also posted a graphic flyer on PWCC's social media platforms for better visibility. The flyer directed interested participants to the Google form.

3.3 Interviews

For the usability test to be conducted smoothly, we structured an interview questionnaire centered around the 4 tasks mentioned above. The interview questionnaire also included pre-task questions and post-task questions which enabled us to capture parents' needs and motivations for using the website for a more comprehensive understanding of the current usability of the website. Before conducting the interviews, consent to record the session for further analysis and research purposes was sought from the participants. The interviews were moderated in a semi-structured manner leaving room for probing questions. **See appendices for the complete questionnaire draft.*

3.4 Role of the Moderator

The moderator is typically an expert in usability testing who interacts with the users during the testing session, asking them questions, providing support and feedback, and encouraging them to think aloud about their experience. The moderator can also gather additional data such as user behavior, preferences, and opinions.

3.5 Role of the Note-taker

The role of a note-taker during usability testing is to document and record the user's actions, behaviors, and feedback during the testing session. The note-taker usually sits behind the scenes and takes detailed notes on the participant's performance, such as the tasks completed, the time taken, and any issues encountered.

3.6 Analysis

The responses and notes recorded during the usability testing interviews were logged onto a Google spreadsheet for analysis. Emerging patterns and problems were identified through multiple internal huddles with the team, and plausible design solutions were brainstormed as a part of recommendations proposed to the client.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
1	Respondent Name	PWCC Parent	Screen (mobile/desktop)	Number of children	Child 1 Age group	Child 2 Age group	Programs enrolled in currently/previously and experience	Expectations from a childrens education service website (What do you typically use the site for)	Kid-friendly Design (colour, look and feel)	Issues with design/aesthetics
2	Harrison Juke	Yes	Mobile	2	5 - 9 years	10 - 15 years	Unsure	Things that would be interesting to a child, and that a child would like to look at.** Uses the site primarily to look for activities from the kids. The last time he used it was to register.	Positive comment	N/A. Loved the fact that there are pictures and images from the school.
3	Mason Bush	Yes	Mobile	1	3 - 4 years	Not applicable	N/A	simple design, contrasting colours. Features like chatting box and interactive features would be nice for kids. Not just parents. Mobile friendly .	Positive comment	N/A
4	Ian Robbs	Yes	Mobile	1	18 - 36 months	Not applicable	I have a 2 year old son. He had been in the center for at least a year. We took up the idea from a friend, his child attended it and he recommended it to me. My friend did most of the steps of enrollment because at the time, because of my walking situation we needed a child care support program for my kid. He no longer goes there because he is relocated	I would expect to see some animation, more pictures because it has to be for kids. For us as parents to use the site, the kid also has to be there so he can also see.	Positive comment	
5	Emily Moore	No	Mobile	1	3 - 4 years	Not applicable		Lot's of color	Positive comment	

Figure 3.6 : Screenshot of the spreadsheet used for analyzing responses and notes from the usability testing interviews

4. Participants

With this study we interviewed eight participants total in order to get an overall sense of the population and views of the parents who were currently and previously using the Port Washington Child Center Website most frequently. All participants were parents of small children. Four of the participants, or 50% of them had babies, 18-36 months old. Multiple of our participants had difficulty connecting with the wifi and often had to reschedule, leading to an understanding that the website may not be as effective without a focus on free wifi or public resource enhancement as well for their clientele. We also found that seven out of eight participants preferred using their mobile phones to access the site.

5. Big Picture Findings

Overall there were a few findings that very clearly shown through throughout our testing. Regarding the site's design, our study found that users enjoyed the look and feel of the website, especially seeing photos of the children and their activities. The gallery, and new, up-and-coming photos of the center's activities was the most mentioned section of the website. Another finding was that the majority of our users used their mobile phones to access the website most often, leading to our researchers clearly analyzing and including mobile design as a highlight in our problem section.

The navigation and language on the site was generally easy to follow, participants were quickly able to accomplish the majority of our tasks via the website. In general, activities provided by the center was one of the most important things to users, and information around them was a major reason that they would be interested in accessing the site. They were most interested in finding out which activities were being provided, and various details regarding those activities, including the Calendar of Events, activity schedule, information around transportation to the center, etc. Additionally, users found that the FAQs on the homepage were useful and very easy to use. However, our researchers identified a series of issues regarding the mobile design, third party accessibility, and the program enrollment process which are forthcoming.

6. Problems & Recommendations

6.1 Using Homepage on Mobile View

Problem

Through our user study, we found out that seven out of eight participants used their mobile phones to access the PWCC website, meaning there is a close to ninety percent chance of parents using the website on the mobile view. We also observed that most parents navigated to other parts of the website through the homepage instead of using the navigation menu (by clicking on the hamburger icon). This suggests that the homepage served as an important feature of the website for high level navigation. However, there were several minor usability issues that were observed that worked counterintuitively with the functionality of the homepage.

One of them was the amount of promotional information regarding upcoming events and short-term programs at the beginning of the homepage. Our pre-test questions enabled us to discover that parents wanted to see information about long term programs, facilities provided by the center, tuition, schedule, and child development, first as it was something that was most important to them. The current homepage does not prioritize having this information. Rather, a significant amount of space on the homepage is dedicated to upcoming short term programs and events such as "Kidsport Summer" and "Playground Fundraiser.", thus creating confusion about long term and short term programs. Furthermore, the homepage lacked a search feature that could help parents easily find the information they were looking for without having to scan through the excessive promotional information provided on the homepage.

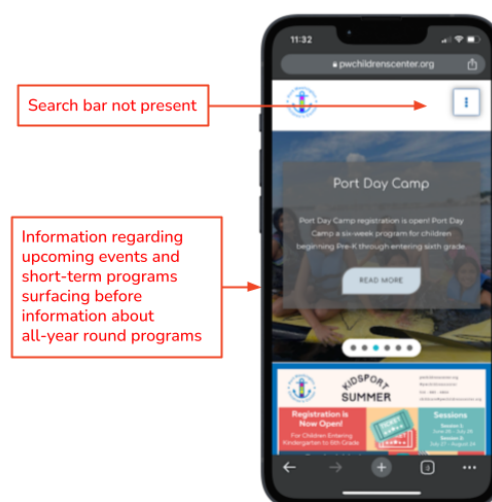


Figure 6.1 (a) : Screenshot of homepage-specific problems

We also observed that several distinguishing call-to-action buttons such as “Apply for our programs”, “KidsPort 2023”, “Make a tuition payment” grouped awkwardly together, without any descriptions for context. Finally, we observed that there were certain UI elements on the homepage, containing important program-related information that were only activated on hover. This feature was not supported on mobile devices and worked best for desktop navigation.

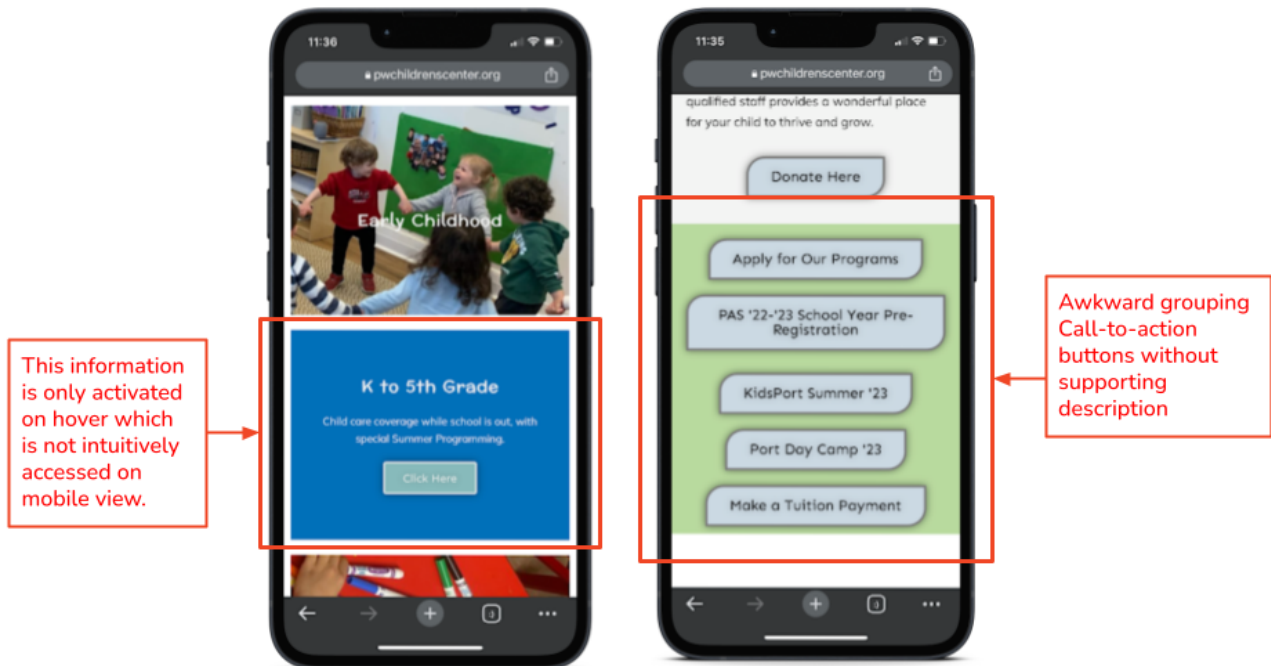


Figure 6.1 (b) : Screenshot of homepage-specific problems

Recommendation

For parents to smoothly use the homepage as a high-level navigation function, we recommend certain changes be implemented in the information hierarchy along with some additional UI features. These recommendations were made with the understanding that the mobile view of the website should be responsive to accommodate parents' proclivity to access the website on their mobile phones.

Information most useful for parents should surface on the homepage first. For this, there should be a clear distinction between short-term and long-term (all year round) programs in such a way that gives long-term programs more screen visibility.

Buttons on the homepage should be able to direct users to other information related to programs, calendars, center facilities, and tuition found in other sections of the navigation menu. Following this, the call-to-action buttons should be grouped alongside their corresponding descriptions.

Additionally, we recommend the use of imagery as much as possible as an aid to contextualizing information since visual cues are more helpful for parents.

Lastly, we advocate the inclusion of a search feature, as it would make any required information instantly accessible for parents. Some participants also suggested having a chat-box option, which can be considered an alternative suggestion.

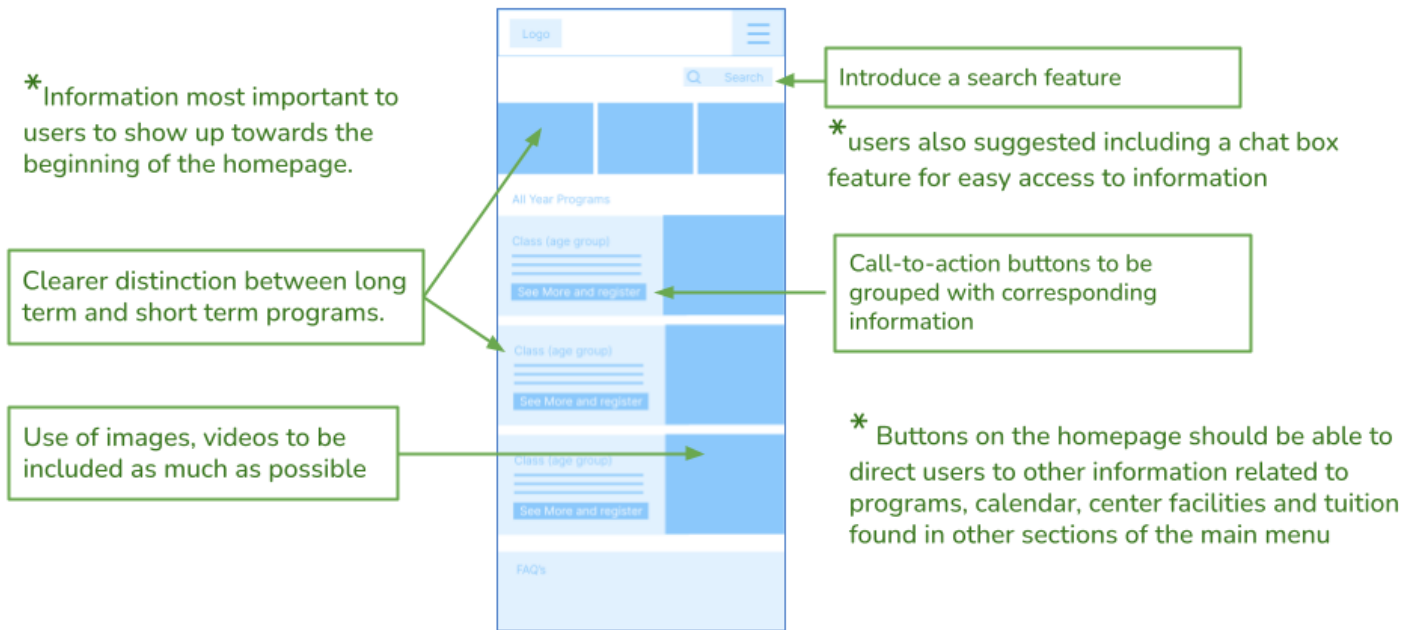


Figure 6.1 (c) : Mock-up of recommended solutions for homepage use

6.2 Payment Design Consistency and Methods

Problem

One of the significant issues we identified through our user research was the inconsistency and lack of clarity in the payment design and methods on the PWCC website. We discovered that the payment pages for tuition and donations utilized a third-party service that was not controlled by PWCC. This third-party service disrupted the design flow of the site and caused confusion for users, as there was no warning that clicking on the payment links would lead to another site.

Furthermore, the payment pages were unclearly designed, with pop-ups and confusing layouts that made it less likely for users to trust the site with their financial information. Additionally, we found that the payment pages lacked multiple payment options, which could be frustrating for users who prefer specific payment methods. This inconsistency in design and lack of payment options could cause a negative impact on PWCC's ability to attract potential donors and retain clients.

To address these issues, we recommend that PWCC consider implementing a more consistent and user-friendly payment system on their website. It would be beneficial to provide users with clear information and warnings about any third-party payment services. The payment pages should also have a clear and straightforward design that aligns with the overall aesthetic of the site. Additionally, providing multiple payment options could increase user satisfaction and lead to higher conversion rates. Overall, addressing these payment design and method issues could improve the website's effectiveness and increase user trust in the PWCC.

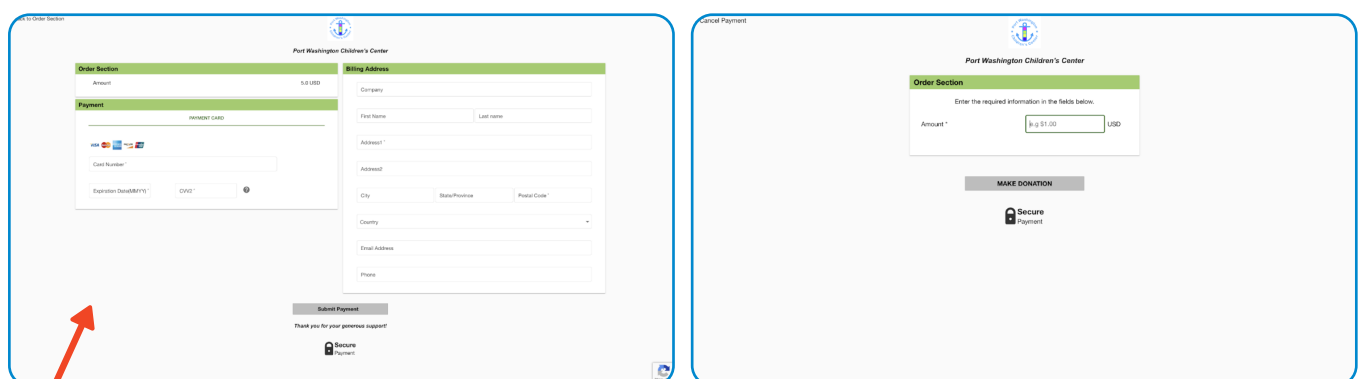


Figure 6.2 (a) : Screenshot of Donate Pages

The payment pages does not have multiple payment options

Recommendation 1

To address the payment design and method issues we identified during our user research, we recommend that PWCC create separate pages for tuition and donation payments. These pages should provide detailed information about the payments, including what they cover, their importance, and the benefits that the users will receive. By having separate pages for tuition and donation payments, users can have a better understanding of the purpose of each payment and why they are necessary. This will also provide users with the opportunity to make informed decisions about whether to make the payments or not.

Moreover, these separate pages should include a link to the external payment site, so users can make their payments easily and securely. This approach will not only help to increase user trust in the website but will also enhance the user experience. By providing detailed information on separate pages, PWCC can communicate the importance of these payments to the users and how their contributions can help support the center's programs. Additionally, this approach can improve user engagement and encourage more donations to support PWCC's mission.

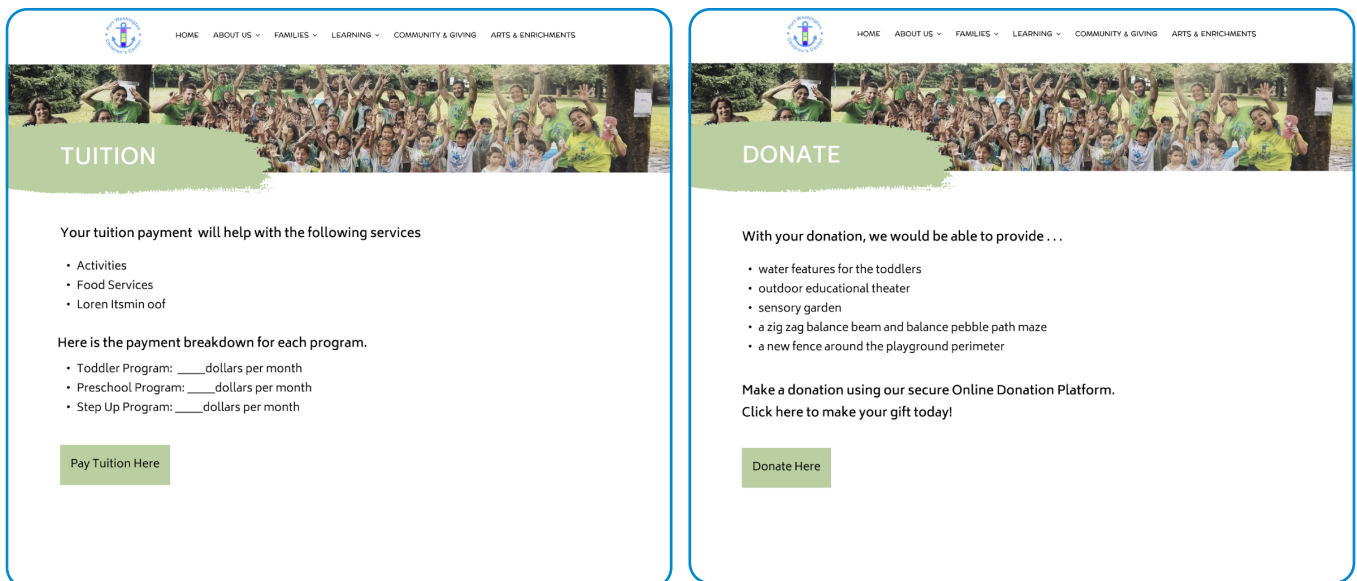
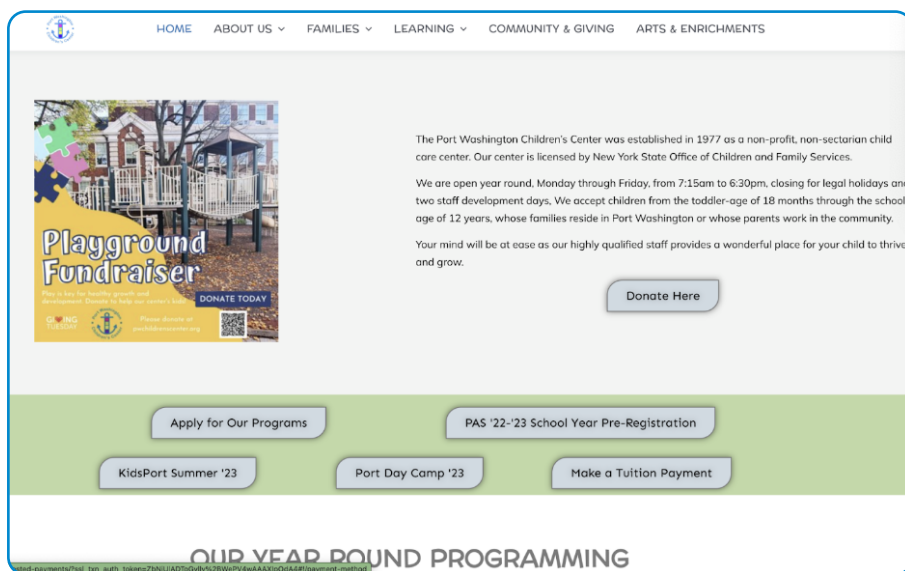


Figure 6.2 (b) : Proposed Recommendations for Payment Design Consistency and Methods

Recommendation 2

Our second recommendation to address the payment design and method issues on the PWCC website is to include a pop-up warning sign that clearly states that clicking on the donation and tuition payment buttons will lead to an external payment site. This warning sign will help users to be aware that they will be redirected to a third-party payment site. It will also help to reduce the confusion and frustration that users may feel when they are redirected to a new page without warning.

Furthermore, the pop-up warning sign will increase user trust in the website by providing them with reassurance that their payments will be processed securely. This approach will also show users that PWCC is committed to providing a safe and reliable payment system that they can trust. By implementing this recommendation, PWCC can enhance the user experience and improve the website's overall effectiveness. Overall, we believe that implementing a warning sign will help to address the payment design and method issues and increase user satisfaction.



Pop-Up when pressing Donate so users know that the page is leading to an external site.

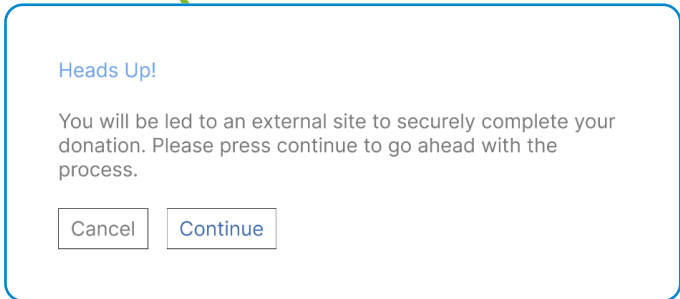


Figure 6.2 (c) : Proposed Recommendations for Payment Design Consistency and Methods

6.3 Enrollment Into Programs

Problem

A key issue that was identified with our user study was with the program enrollment. As part of the interview tasks, we had asked the participants to find a program that was best suited for their child and enroll them into the program.

During this task, we observed that majority of the participants were navigating successfully to explore the programs with the help of the navigation bar. The navigation bar here serves its function perfectly. However, for the second part of the task, the users were getting lost. We observed that the users would hover around the program section to find what they were looking for. Upon further questioning, a few participants explained that they were expecting to be taken to the enrollment related page from the program section they were interested in.

Further, a few of the participants voiced that they would like to know more information about the program, specifically the activities offered, calendar of events, food schedule, tuition information, along with a 'schedule a tour' option.

Additionally, there were inconsistencies noticed in the labeling and organizing of content within the navigation bar and the pages. Some of the sections in the navigation bar was not available on the page (for ex. Breakfast program). One of the reasons for users spending more time within the page could be caused by the inadequate sectioning of content.

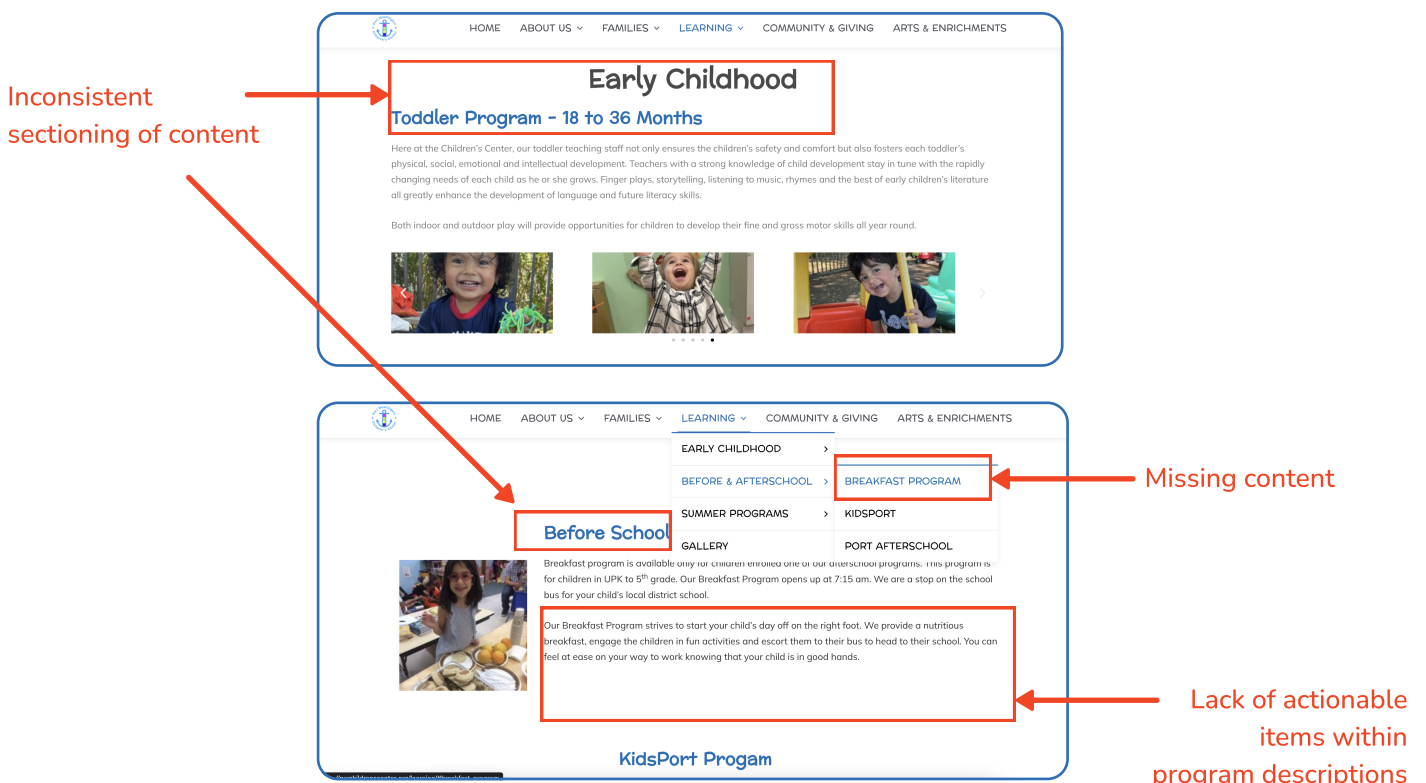


Figure 6.3 (a) : Screenshot of Learning page

Recommendation

For the problem of sectioning the content, we recommend having a consistent visual style to clearly distinguish the different program types that are offered. This will allow the users to immediately catch the change in font, style, and color to identify the section that they have now entered.

Solving the problem of navigating to the enrollment-related documents could be done by having a clear Call-to-action button where the users are able to enroll in the specific programs, as opposed to a generic enrollment form. This would give the users more confidence in the actions they have performed. Having the button near the program also matches their expressed expectations of the website, allowing for a smoother enrollment experience.

Consistent sectioning of the content for easy demarcation



Program-wise registration and option to learn more about it.



Figure 6.3 (b) : Proposed recommendations for sectioning content and enrollment navigation

As we noticed that the participants were looking for more information, we recommend having a separate page for each of the programs. This page would be navigable from the broader 'Learning' page, with the help of a button that says 'Learn more'. This will allow the Learning page to remain short and crisp and offering extra information only for those who are interested in learning more. Avoiding putting all the information in the same page (Learning Page) will make sure that the users are not overwhelmed by the information offered.

The information that the participants were interested in knowing included- program costs, tuition information, transport facilities, activities offered, calendar of events and food schedule. All of this information can be incorporated in the programs designated pages.

Consistent sectioning of the content for easy demarcation

Offering additional information to users who want to know more

Popular functions maintained for easy access

Figure 6.3 (c) : Proposed recommendations for sectioning content and enrollment navigation

6.4 Additional Recommendations

Overall we have listed and detailed a number of findings that could be used to improve the website. There are some additional findings from our testing which details changes that we would like to encourage the center to make regarding the website and the client's experience overall:

1. The number one thing we would encourage from our testing results is to continue adding in videos and animated content, keeping the gallery updated, and consistently adding new photos into the gallery.
2. The site should continue to have, or prioritize a focus on the center's activities and the programs they offer.
3. Regarding the homepage, adding the center's address and hours to the top of the page is a quick fix for anyone looking to see where the center is located.
4. Adding extended information on what programs offer and potentially reviews or personalized memos of what prior clients have said about the center's program and work, was something that was consistently mentioned.
5. Some users mentioned potentially including the addition of a chatbot into the website, to answer additional questions.
6. Finally, updating the mission statement to highlight an involvement with parents, would be a useful tactic.

In general our testing found various positives and negatives throughout the user's experience. In order to improve the user's experience overall, this series could be looked at to increase involvement and satisfaction with the site's design.

7. Conclusion

Our moderated testing over the course of this semester was deeply beneficial to gaining an understanding of the Port Washington Center's user base, their thoughts and opinions, and their needs regarding regular use of the center's website. We as researchers acquired a substantial amount of information around the center's mobile and desktop web design, usability, and payment processes, all of which was used to recommend certain specific feature and design changes to improve overall client experience and usage. After our analysis and recommendations regarding potential updates to the customer's user experience, we took the time to speak again with the center and give a presentation to both them and our teammates in order to showcase our results.

Moving forward, additional testing that we identified could be beneficial would be responsive mobile design testing, ensuring that the primary way that users are accessing the site is without flaws and that any small design changes are translating appropriately. We also would recommend additional testing regarding their enrollment and donation processes, and potentially analyzing the current process to identify and smooth any user or administrative pain-points. Another round of this type of testing generally could be beneficial to the center's user acquisition overall. Testing the company website's user experience is important to maintaining good client connections and continuing to deep dive into their user base's wants, needs, and overall feelings regarding the center's work. We truly enjoyed working with the center, and would be happy to help them in the future with any additional analysis.

8. Appendices

8.1 Questions

Hi xxx, how are you? (Ice breaker greetings)	
Thanks for participating in our interview. We really appreciate you taking time out of your day to join us.	
Before we begin, this interview will be recorded for research purposes. We may review it with our professor, but it will be used for our research exclusively. Is that alright with you?	
[Record Screen]	
Participant Background (~5 mins)	
Mobile or Desktop version?	
Before jumping to our main questions, could you tell me a little bit about yourself? (probe: background, hobbies/ interests etc)	
Is your child currently enrolled/ was previously enrolled at PWCC? What program? How did you find out about the center and go about the enrollment? How was your overall experience of enrolling your child?	
Pre-Test Questions:	
P1	What do you expect to see on a childcare service site?
P3	Have you used this site before?
P4	For what purpose?
P2	What information do you generally use the Port Washington website for?
P5	How was your experience of using the site?
Test Prep:	
I will now be sending you the website link via Zoom Chat. Could you please click on the link and share your screen with us to begin the testing?	
Test Tasks & Questions:	
T1	Task 1: Take some time to explore the homepage. What are the first few things that stand out to you? Is there anything that you find relevant to your needs/ interests? Why?
Questions for Task 1:	
1	Can you find information about the transportation offered?
2	What do you feel about the look and feel of the website?
3	Is there anything you found confusing or not explained? <i>Noting: Where the users are naturally drawn, understanding the common interests</i>
T2	Task 2: You are interested in enrolling your child in a program, could you please find a program that might benefit your child's learning - and enrollment-related information (or required documents)
Questions for Task 2:	
1	What is the most important thing to you while enrolling your child in a program?
2	Are you able to find all the information you were looking for?
3	Was the information available and clear?
4	Have you ever called in the office for any questions that you are looking for? What information were you looking for?
5	Can you find the tuition schedule? Is the schedule clear to you?
<i>Noting: Whether users feel equipped with the information provided in the sections, if they need additional/external assistance, the directness with which users are able to complete the task.</i>	

T3	Task 3: If you were donating to pwchildrenscenter.org, where would you go?
Questions for Task 3:	
1	How does the page make you feel?
2	Do you have all the information you need to make the donation? Is there anything that would influence your decision to donate?
T4	Task 4: You are interested in knowing more about PWCC'S mission, where would you go to find this information?
Questions for Task 4:	
1	After reading the mission statement, what are some of your immediate thoughts/ impressions?
2	If you were to describe the website overall in 3 words, what three words would you use?
Post-Test Questions:	
PT1	What is your general impression of the website?
PT2	Was it easy to find the information you were looking for?
PT3	If there anything that you thought we were going do that didn't come up?
PT4	As we're wrapping up, what do you think is the most important thing I should take away from this interview?
PT5	Do you have any final thoughts or comments to add to today's interview?
PT6	Does my colleague have any questions, comments, anything else for the participant before we go? [Secondary Researcher]

8.2 Interview Responses and Analysis sheet

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1RrDEuAKIkYqvn2mleo999Ja4nUrKstC0FUCcOQ3eOaE/edit#gid=773859041>

8.3 Recruitment Form

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1i3dRaUxA6NM06vmGunBnhVsAb37XQkZeQtU3vkAY86s/edit>

9. References

The Port Washington Children’s Center Website - <https://pwchildrenscenter.org/>