University of New Hampshire
University of New Hampshire Scholars' Repository

Sociology Scholarship | Sociology

2-1997

Outside Evaluation of Conecticut's Family Resource Centers : Final report

Barbara Wauchope
University of New Hampshire

Susan Frankel
RMC Research Corp., Portsmouth, NH.

Cynthia Harvell
RMC Research Corp., Portsmouth, NH.

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholars.unh.edu/soc_facpub

Part of the Social Work Commons

Recommended Citation

Wauchope, Barbara; Frankel, Susan; and Harvell, Cynthia, "Outside Evaluation of Conecticut's Family Resource Centers : Final report" (1997). *Sociology Scholarship*. 89.
https://scholars.unh.edu/soc_facpub/89

This Report is brought to you for free and open access by the Sociology at University of New Hampshire Scholars' Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in Sociology Scholarship by an authorized administrator of University of New Hampshire Scholars' Repository. For more information, please contact Scholarly.Communication@unh.edu.

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 435 431 PS 026 989

AUTHOR Frankel, Susan; Harvell, Cynthia; Wauchope, Barbara
TITLE Outside Evaluation of Connecticut's Family Resource Centers. Final Report. Volumes 1 and 2.
INSTITUTION RMC Research Corp., Portsmouth, NH.
SPONS AGENCY Connecticut State Dept. of Education, Hartford. Bureau of Vocational-Technical Schools.
PUB DATE 1997-02-00
NOTE 257p.; "With the Assistance of: Sharon Beckstrom, Clifford J. Cox, Mary Heath."
PUB TYPE Reports - Evaluative (142) -- Tests/Questionnaires (160)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC11 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Elementary Secondary Education; *Family Programs; *Integrated Services; Models; Program Descriptions; Program Effectiveness; Program Evaluation
IDENTIFIERS Connecticut; *Family Resource and Support Programs; *School Based Services

ABSTRACT

In 1993, the Connecticut State Department of Education received federal support for the activities of nine existing Family Resource Centers (FRC) and for funding new FRCs. The FRCs were based on the premise that many childhood and adolescent problems can be prevented by strengthening effective family management practices and establishing a continuum of child care and support services linked to public schools or located in public school buildings. This report details the evaluation of the 18 school-based/linked FRCs, describing their structure and contexts, examining evidence of service use, and presenting information on the effects of the FRCs on families and schools. Chapter 1 presents the service delivery model, describes the core services, and describes the evaluation plan. Chapters 2 through 5 summarize findings related to the following areas: (1) structure of core services, service delivery, financial supports, and staffing characteristics; (2) processes used to deliver services in a school-based/linked setting, including collaborative arrangements; (3) use of FRC services; (4) impacts of FRCs on families and children; and (5) impact of FRCs on schools. Chapter 6 discusses the patterns observed that reflect the implementation of the FRC service delivery model and implications for delivering comprehensive integrated services to families. This chapter also presents recommendations for sustaining the school-based/linked delivery model of the FRCs at meaningful levels. Chapter 7 presents profiles of the 18 FRCs, including their setting, service delivery arrangements, primary collaborative arrangements, and the school relationship. Nine appendices include a description of the Evaluation Support System and data collection instruments. (KB)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION
CENTER (ERIC)
X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

ED 435 431

RESEARCH CORPORATION

Final Report

Outside Evaluation of Connecticut's Family Resource Centers

Volume 1

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

026988

RMC Research Corporation
1000 Market Street
Portsmouth, New Hampshire 03801

February 1997

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Marsha J. Howland
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

ERIC

Final Report

Outside Evaluation of Connecticut's Family Resource Centers

Volume 1

Prepared for:
The Connecticut State Department of Education

Written by:
Susan Frankel, Ph.D.
Cynthia Harvell, M.S.W.
Barbara Wauchope, Ph.D.

With the Assistance of:
Sharon Beckstrom, Ed.D.
Clifford J. Cox, Ph.D.
Mary Heath, M.Ed.

RMC Research Corporation
1000 Market Street
Portsmouth, NH 03801

February 1997

Contents

I. *Introduction* ..... I - 1

Family Resource Center Service Delivery Model ..... I - 2
Evaluation Plan ..... I - 3
Methodology ..... I - 6
Use of Comparison School Data ..... I - 8
Technical Assistance ..... I - 9
Structure of This Report ..... I - 9

Describing the FRCs ..... *Chapters II and III*

II. *Describing the Core Services* ..... II - 1

Preschool Child Care ..... II - 1
School Age Child Care ..... II - 2
Families in Training (FIT) ..... II - 3
Adult Education ..... II - 4
Family Child Care Provider Training ..... II - 5
Positive Youth Development (PYD) ..... II - 6
Resource and Referral ..... II - 7

Types of Service Delivery Arrangements ..... II - 7
Direct Administration ..... II - 8
Collaboration Approaches ..... II - 8
Referral with Support ..... II - 8
Referral Only ..... II - 9

Funding ..... II - 10
Funding Sources ..... II - 11
Expenditures ..... II - 12
Costs Per Participant ..... II - 15
In-kind Contributions ..... II - 16

Staffing ..... II - 19
Administrators ..... II - 19
Part-time and Full-time Staff ..... II - 20
Volunteers ..... II - 23

Contents (Continued)

III. Describing the Context ..... III - 1

School Setting ..... III - 1
Number of Schools Linked to Family Resource Centers ..... III - 2
Location of the Family Resource Centers ..... III - 2
Communication Between FRC and School Staff Members ..... III - 3
Referrals from the School Staff to the Family Resource Center ..... III - 5
Perceptions of the School Setting for an FRC ..... III - 6

Relationships with Fiscal Agents ..... III - 7

Opportunities for Collaboration ..... III - 7
Existing networks ..... III - 8
Agreements ..... III - 9
Advisory Committee ..... III - 9
Communication ..... III - 10
Schedule of Service Programs ..... III - 11

Effects of the FRCs ..... *Chapters IV and V*

IV. Participants' Use of Services ..... IV - 1

Characteristics of Participating Families ..... IV - 1
Income ..... IV - 2
Ethnicity ..... IV - 3
Language ..... IV - 4
Length of Participation ..... IV - 5
How Families Know About FRC Services ..... IV - 6

Service Participation ..... IV - 7

Extent of Services Received ..... IV - 10

Perceptions of Utilization ..... IV - 13
Reasons for Participation ..... IV - 14
Barriers to Participation ..... IV - 15
Satisfaction of Participants ..... IV - 17

Contents (Continued)

V. Impacts on Families and Schools ..... V - 1

Impact of Family Resource Centers on Families ..... V - 1
Overall Perceptions of Impact ..... V - 1
Perceptions of Impact by Length of Participation ..... V - 4
Perception of Impact by Language, Ethnicity, and Income ..... V - 9

Impacts of Family Resource Center Services on Schools ..... V - 14
Children's Behavior in Schools ..... V - 14
Parent Involvement ..... V - 16
School Climate ..... V - 17
Stakeholders' Perceptions of Impact ..... V - 18

VI. Patterns and Recommendations ..... VI - 1

Recommendations: Sustaining the Best Qualities of the
Family Resource Center Service Delivery Model ..... VI - 7

VII. Site Profiles

Betances Family Resource Center
Bridgeport Family Resource Center
Danbury Family Resource Center
East Hartford Family Resource Center
Family Resource Network, Westin, Wilton, Westport, and Norwalk
Groton Family Resource Center
Killingly Family Resource Center
Manchester Memorial Hospital Family Support and Resource Center
Meriden Family Resource Network
Milford Family Resource Center
New London Family Resource Center
North Branford Family Resource Center
North Hartford Family Resource Center
Norwich Family Resource Center
Rogers School Family Resource Center
West Hartford Family Resource Center
Wexler Family Resource Center
Windham Family Resource Center

Exhibits

Chapter 1

Exhibit 1: Family Resource Center Delivery Model ..... I - 5

Chapter II

Exhibit 2: Number of Centers Using Service Delivery Arrangements for Core Services ..... II - 9
Exhibit 3: Family Resource Center Funding, FY 96 ..... II - 10
Exhibit 4: Family Resource Center Funding Sources, FY 96 ..... II - 11
Exhibit 5: Family Resource Center Expenditures, FY 96 ..... II - 13
Exhibit 6: Family Resource Center Expenditures by Funding Group, FY 96 ..... II - 14
Exhibit 7: Costs Per Participant for Core Services by Service Delivery Arrangements, FY 96 ..... II - 16
Exhibit 8: In-kind Contributions to Connecticut Family Resource Centers, FY 96 .... II - 18
Exhibit 9: Full- and Part-time Staff Members Paid by Family Resource Center Funds II - 21
Exhibit 10: Primary Job Category of Family Resource Center Staff ..... II - 22
Exhibit 11: Education Level of Family Resource Center Staff Members ..... II - 22
Exhibit 12 : Use of Volunteers in Family Resource Centers ..... II - 23

Chapter III

Exhibit 13: How School Staff Members Find Out About Family Resource Center Services ..... III - 3
Exhibit 14: School Staff Contact with Family Resource Center Staff Members ..... III - 4

Chapter IV

Exhibit 15: Yearly Household Income of Family Resource Center Participating Families ..... IV - 2
Exhibit 16: Ethnic Background of Family Resource Center Participating Families .... IV - 3
Exhibit 17: Primary Language Used in the Home by Family Resource Center Participating Families ..... IV - 4
Exhibit 18: Length of Time in Family Resource Center Activities ..... IV - 5
Exhibit 19: Sources of Referral to Family Resource Centers ..... IV - 6
Exhibit 20: Participation in Core Services ..... IV - 7
Exhibit 21: Participation in Each Service ..... IV - 8
Exhibit 22: Participation in Services by Type of Service Arrangement ..... IV - 9
Exhibit 23: Hours of Core Services Provided ..... IV - 11
Exhibit 24: Number of Hours Participating in Family Resource Center Services .... IV - 12
Exhibit 25: Self-Reported Participation in Family Resource Center Core Services .. IV - 13
Exhibit 26: Reasons Given for Lack of Participation in Family Resource Center Programs ..... IV - 16
Exhibit 27: Overall Rating of Participant Satisfaction with Family Resource Center .. IV - 17

Exhibits (Continued)

Chapter V

Exhibit 28: Meaning of the Family Resource Center to Participants . . . . . V - 2
Exhibit 29: Meaning of Family Resource Center Participation by Length of Time in Family Resource Center Activities: Parents' Knowledge of and Behavior Toward Children . . . . . V - 5
Exhibit 30: Meaning of Family Resource Center Participation by Length of Time in Family Resource Center Activities: Parents' Attitudes Toward School and School Experience . . . . . V - 6
Exhibit 31: Meaning of Family Resource Center Participation by Length of Time in Family Resource Center Activities: Parents' Perceptions of Social Support . . . . . V - 7
Exhibit 32: Meaning of Family Resource Center Participation by Length of Time in Family Resource Center Activities: Parents' Perceptions of Children's Growth . . . . . V - 8
Exhibit 33: Meaning of Family Resource Center Participation by Length of Time in Family Resource Center Activities: Parents' Perceptions of Their Own Growth . . . . . V - 9
Exhibit 34: Meaning of Family Resource Center Participation by Primary Language: Perceptions of Children's Growth . . . . . V - 10
Exhibit 34: Meaning of Family Resource Center Participation by Primary Language: Perceptions of Children's Growth (continued) . . . . . V - 11
Exhibit 35: Meaning of Family Resource Center Participation by Primary Language: Perceptions of Personal Growth . . . . . V - 12
Exhibit 36: School Staff Perceptions of the Effects of the Family Resource Centers on Children . . . . . V - 15
Exhibit 37 School Staff Perceptions of the Effects of the Family Resource Centers on Parents . . . . . V - 16
Exhibit 38: School Staff Perceptions of the Effects of the Family Resource Center within the School . . . . . V - 17

Chapter VI

Exhibit 39: Location of Family Resource Center Administrative Offices . . . . . VI - 2
Exhibit 40: Collaborative Arrangements . . . . . VI - 3
Exhibit 41: Fiscal Agents . . . . . VI - 4
Exhibit 42: Role of the Advisory Committee . . . . . VI - 5
Exhibit 43: Staffing the Core Services . . . . . VI - 6

Chapter I. Introduction

Chapter I. Introduction

In 1993, the Connecticut State Department of Education was awarded a three-year federal demonstration grant to support the activities of nine existing Family Resource Centers (FRCs) and fund the development of new Family Resource Centers. The nine existing Family Resource Centers had been in operation for varying lengths of time ranging from seven years to less than one year. Nine new sites were funded in the Spring of 1994. RMC Research Corporation (RMC) was contracted by the Connecticut State Department of Education to evaluate these 18 school-based/linked Family Resource Centers by describing the structure and context of the FRCs, gathering evidence of service use, and determining the effects of the FRCs on families and schools. RMC also was expected to provide technical assistance to the all sites to facilitate development of local evaluations and data collection across all sites. The evaluation activities began in July, 1994 and were completed in September, 1996.

Although several of the FRCs have been in operation prior to the start of the evaluation contract, this evaluation is the first attempt to document operations and effectiveness collectively across the centers. Findings from this evaluation will provide policymakers with information about service delivery and effectiveness of Connecticut's Family Resource Centers. Specifically, this evaluation report is intended to assist state and local officials in their decisions to assess and improve the model of school-based/school-linked family support services for children and families in Connecticut.

The *Final Report* comprises two volumes. *Volume I* includes 1) the findings on the delivery and costs of the core services and the context of the Family Resource Center (FRC) service delivery model; 2) the findings on service use and perceptions of effects of the services on families and schools; 3) a discussion of the patterns observed that reflect the implementation of the FRC service model, implications for delivering comprehensive integrated services to families, and requirements for sustaining the FRC service model; and 4) a profile of each of the 18 FRCs. *Volume II* contains the appendices with detailed descriptions of the methods and copies of the instruments used during the second year of the evaluation time period.

The remaining sections of this chapter describe the Family Resource Center service delivery model, RMC's evaluation plan, and a brief description of the evaluation methodology and guiding evaluation questions used to obtain information from the 18 Family Resource Centers.

Family Resource Center Service Delivery Model

The Connecticut Family Resource Center service delivery model is based on the premise that an array of childhood and adolescent problems can be prevented by strengthening effective family management practices and establishing a continuum of child care and support services linked to public schools or located in public school buildings.

It is assumed by the FRC model that healthy development and good education begin with access to the following seven types of quality services:

- **full-time preschool child care** (for children ages 3-5) available on a year-round basis for at least 11 hours per day;[1]
- **school age child care** available before and after the school day and on a full-day basis during the summer and when school is not in session;
- **families in training**, an integrated approach to home visiting, group meetings, and monitoring of child development for new and expectant parents;
- **adult education** involving a range of education services including parent training, adult education for parents who have not received a high school diploma, instruction in English as a second language, and instruction in basic literacy skills;
- **support and training for family child care providers** through workshops, support groups, monthly newsletters, and referral services specifically for infant care;
- **positive youth development services** (for children in grades 4-6) that include a range of recreational and education opportunities targeted at preventing teen pregnancy, substance abuse, and student drop-out; and
- **resource and referral services** for issues pertaining to the well-being of the family.

Although the services listed above are considered the core services for *all* of the Connecticut Family Resource Centers, other services (e.g., counseling, health screening) may be offered based on family and community needs and the focus and resources of sponsoring organizations.

The Family Resource Center model uses the school as a point of entry to an integrated system of community-based family support and child development services. Each FRC is expected to design and deliver the core services within the context of community needs and values, the quality and extent of existing community services, the organization and climate of the

[1] List of the core services as they were presented in the Connecticut State Department of Education's request for proposals for evaluation services.

school(s), and availability of resources. There is an understanding at the state level that all FRCs will incorporate the shared philosophy of the model, but that each Center will be unique, reflecting the community where it is located.

Collaboration is the dominant strategy used for the delivery of integrated services. Integration typically means increased sharing and coordination of resources between partners, such as shared space and personnel, and combined means of service delivery designed intake forms and referral protocols. Collaborations with schools, community groups, social service agencies, and other neighborhood organizations are established to facilitate the implementation of comprehensive, integrated services. The FRC model assumes that over time the utilization of comprehensive, integrated services by families will improve their quality of life and success in the community. FRC services are available to families of all income levels and participation in FRC services is voluntary.

Evaluation Plan

The goals of this evaluation were to 1) describe the Family Resource Centers, 2) document service use, and 3) determine the effects of the FRCs on families and schools.

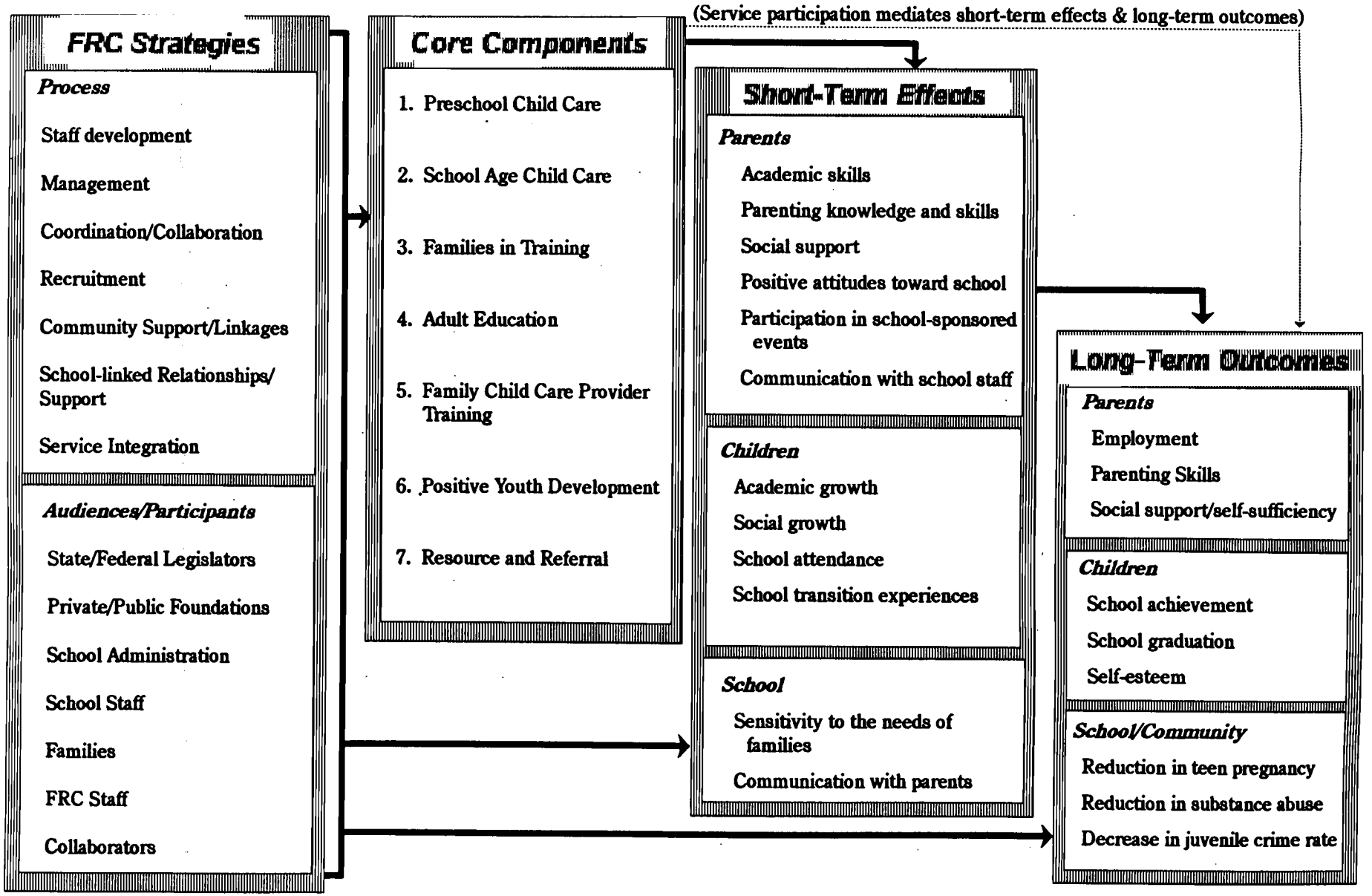
The FRCs are described in terms of core services, the arrangements used to deliver the core services, funding and staffing patterns across the 18 centers, and the collaborative relationships (e.g., schools, communities, agencies) that facilitate the delivery of services. The findings reported in Chapters II and III create the context for understanding how services located in a school setting are delivered to families and the range of effects of the Family Resource Centers on families and schools.

The effects of the Family Resource Centers are described by documenting the use of services and collecting participant's reports of service impacts on families and schools. The long-term goals of the FRC service delivery model are reflected in outcomes such as enhanced parenting skills, improved employment skills, increased school achievement, reduction in teen pregnancy, and a decrease in juvenile crime (see Exhibit 1). It was *not* expected that these long-term outcomes could be attained during a two-year evaluation period. However, the processes and activities used by the Family Resource Centers produce short-term effects which may be observed and linked to the potential long-term outcomes. Therefore, by examining short-term effects, the evaluation is able to assess the progress of the Family Resource Centers toward reaching the long-term outcomes.

For this evaluation, indicators of short-term effects are 1) participants' use of services, 2) parents' perceptions of the impacts of those services on their families, and 3) perceptions by school staff members of the impact of FRCs on their schools. The short-term effects for families are parents' growth in academic skills, parenting knowledge and skills, increased social support; and from the school perspective, improved attitudes toward school on the part of children and growth in children's academic and social skills. For schools, short-term effects assessed include children's behaviors in school, parent involvement in schools, and changes in the school climate. The choices of short-term effects for this evaluation are based on findings from the family support literature and are drawn from experiences of family literacy/support programs such as the national Even Start Family Literacy Program.

Exhibit 1 shows the FRC service delivery model. Strategies that are used by Family Resource Centers (e.g., collaboration, recruitment, relationships with school principals) to deliver the core services produce short-term effects that may be linked to potential long-term outcomes. These outcomes reflect the long-term goals of the Family Resource Center model.

Exhibit 1
Family Resource Center Service Delivery Model



BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Methodology

RMC Research Corporation used a number of interrelated data collection methods and techniques during the evaluation period. These methods included both qualitative and quantitative tools. RMC's approach to conducting the evaluation of Connecticut's Family Resource Centers was to gather data from a variety of sources and to address a number of evaluation questions during any particular data gathering event. Information about the Family Resource Centers was gathered from five sources: FRC staff members and administrators, participants, school staff personnel, collaborators, and local and state stakeholders.

Qualitative data generated by interviews and focus group discussions were used to inform quantitative research efforts. Quantitative approaches consisted primarily of periodic surveys of different populations such as FRC staff, school staff members, administrators, and parents. RMC also used enrollment and participation data gathered from the Evaluation Support System (see below) to create an aggregate picture of the quantity of services provided to and used by participating families.

Below is a brief description of the quantitative and qualitative methods used to gather the information summarized in this report. Copies of each instrument and descriptions of the procedures used to collect information are contained in Volume II of this final report.

Evaluation Support System (ESS). The purpose of the ESS was to collect enrollment and participation data for families who use the Family Resource Center services. This data gathering system consisted of two major components. The first was a set of forms to assist in consistently tracking enrollment, participation counts, and level of intensity of services to Family Resource Center families at all FRC sites. The second was a microcomputer-based relational database that allowed the centers to enter enrollment and participation data on site. The ESS was designed to provide a generic system through which all FRCs could easily document the same enrollment and participation data in the same format. Each FRC was asked to track enrollment and participation information from July 1, 1995 through June 30, 1996. Data diskettes were mailed to RMC and the data were aggregated to construct a picture of the services provided by the centers as well as typical profiles of service use.

Family Resource Center Funding and Budget Surveys. These written surveys were used to obtain information at two points in time from Family Resource Center administrators about the sources and amount of funding controlled by the FRCs, types and value of in-kind support, amount of funding for each component, and expected funding or budget changes. All administrators completed the first survey in February, 1995 and the second one in January, 1996.

Family Resource Center Staffing Surveys. These written surveys were used to obtain information at two points in time from Family Resource Center administrators about the

numbers and types of positions funded by the FRC, salaries and benefits, and participation in educational and training opportunities by FRC staff members. All administrators completed the first survey in February, 1995 and the second one in January, 1996.

Family Resource Center Participant Survey. This survey collected data on participants' utilization and perceptions of the Family Resource Centers. Four areas included in the questionnaire were 1) demographic data describing participants' families, 2) information describing service use and barriers to using FRC services, 3) level of satisfaction, and 4) participants' perceptions of the impact of the FRC on themselves, their families, children, and communities. RMC sent approximately 4,000 questionnaires in two versions, English and Spanish, to FRC administrators and staff members for distribution. The FRCs gave the questionnaires to participants directly or to program directors and teachers to give to families. Participants completing the survey returned them in sealed envelopes to RMC. The sample consisted of 750 respondents from the 18 Family Resource Centers for a response rate of approximately 19%.

Family Resource Center Profile Surveys. These instruments were used to obtain information at two points in time from Family Resource Center administrators about the organization and delivery of the core services. Two written surveys consisting of both open-ended and close-ended questions were developed by RMC. Information was gathered about the organization and management of school relationships, collaboration arrangements, relationships among staff members, and service delivery arrangements for the seven core services. Open-ended questions were used to gain a better understanding of goals and accomplishments, challenges, and use of local evaluation plans. All administrators completed the first survey in November, 1994 and the second one in January, 1996.

Family Resource Center School Staff Survey. A written questionnaire was developed by RMC to gather information from school staff members about the nature of the relationships among FRC and school staff members, the patterns of referrals to the centers from school staff personnel, the level of satisfaction with the FRC and degree of support for its services, and the perceptions of the effects of the FRC on families and schools. Surveys were completed by school staff members in schools only where there was a strong relationship with the FRC. Surveys were distributed to 1185 school staff members; 295 were returned for analysis, a 25% return rate.

Family Resource Center Administrator Interviews. An interview protocol was developed to gather information from all FRC administrators to gain a better understanding of the nature of the relationship between the FRC and the schools, collaborative arrangements, and service integration as it relates to service delivery and effects on families. Telephone interviews were conducted with all 18 administrators between July and September, 1996. Each interview lasted between 45-60 minutes. The information from the telephone interviews and site visits conducted in February, 1995 formed the basis for the Site Profiles. (See Chapter VII Site Profiles.)

Stakeholder Interviews. RMC interviewed eight stakeholders who have been important in the development and support of the FRCs at the state level. Some of these people have played a significant leadership role in the development and expansion of Family Resource Centers in Connecticut. RMC interviewed representatives from the Connecticut State Department of Education and the Connecticut State Division of Social Services, local and

state elected officials, and community representatives with a state-wide perspective (e.g., staff members from foundations and other funding sources). Telephone interviews were conducted with stakeholders to obtain information about his/her involvement in the support of comprehensive, integrated service systems for families. An interview protocol was developed to gather information about the range of knowledge, understanding, and experiences of stakeholders with comprehensive approaches serving families; and familiarity with and perceptions of Connecticut's school-based Family Resource Center service delivery model. Interviews were conducted in September, 1996, lasting 30-45 minutes.

Focus Groups. Several focus group discussions were held with principals, school staff members, parents, and collaborating providers to gain a better understanding of the implementation and perceived effectiveness of the Family Resource Center Service Model. Six focus group sites were chosen because they represented exemplary practices of the FRC service delivery model in terms of solid school relationships, strong collaborative arrangements, and high levels of service integration. Focus group discussions were conducted between October, 1995 and March, 1996.

Use of Comparison School Data

Initially, it was proposed that RMC use a quasi-experimental approach to determine the effectiveness of the Family Resource Center service delivery model for a community by comparing FRC schools to "matched" non-FRC schools on a series of outcome measures. However, the nature of this evaluation — describing the Family Resource Centers and determining the effects of the Family Resource Centers on families and schools — did not lend itself to using a matched comparison approach. The following is a list of reasons addressing the limitations of using comparison groups in this evaluation:

- the difficulty of specifying the independent variables and delimiting the dependent variables;[2]
- the difficulty of isolating attributional causes and effects of the FRC services on parents, children, schools, and communities;
- the difficulty of identifying appropriate outcome measures for comparisons;
- the lack of cost-effective ways to access reliable data; and
- the large number of variables for matching across all the elements of an integrated system, i.e., demographics, class size, school profile, geographic location, etc.

---

[2] Knapp, M. S. (1996). Methodological issues in evaluating integrated services initiatives. *New Directions for Evaluation, 69*, 21-34.

A joint decision was made by RMC Research Corporation and the Connecticut State Department of Education to not pursue the use of comparison groups in this evaluation.

Technical Assistance

Throughout the evaluation, RMC staff members worked with Family Resource Center administrators to involve them in the evaluation process. Technical assistance was provided to facilitate development of local evaluation plans and to assist in data collection for local evaluations.

RMC conducted a series of workshops focused on the concepts and procedures necessary to plan an evaluation sensitive to goals specific to each center. Trainings included identifying outcomes, indicators, and sources of data. Administrators also received training on using evaluation data to persuasively present information about their FRCs to interested audiences such as local school board members, community providers, and potential funders. After attending these sessions, each FRC administrator was expected to develop a local evaluation plan. Twelve FRCs submitted their local evaluation plans to the Connecticut State Department of Education's FRC Program Administrator.

RMC also provided technical assistance to all of the centers in the use of the Evaluation Support System (ESS), the data reporting system. As each site subsequently implemented its ESS, RMC provided a manual and one-on-one technical assistance in person and by telephone throughout the evaluation period. Centers were assisted in both the use of hardware and ESS software. By the end of the evaluation period, all centers had a working computerized system for collecting, recording, and reporting on FRC enrollment and participation. At least one person at each center was trained to collect and submit data to RMC for analysis, and for their own reports if desired. Through this system, each center has been able to collect uniform information over time that can be used to construct an understanding of the use and extent of services delivered across the 18 Family Resource Centers.

Structure of This Report

Chapters II - V of this evaluation report are organized to summarize findings pertaining to the following evaluation questions:

- What is the structure of the core services? What do they look like (e.g. hours of operation, types of programs offered)? What arrangements are used to deliver them? What are the financial supports for FRC services? What are the staffing characteristics? (Chapter II)

- What processes are used to deliver services in a school-based/linked setting? What collaborative arrangements exist with school staff members? with fiscal agents? What opportunities exist to promote collaborative arrangements? (Chapter III)

- Who uses the FRC services? What services are used? How much service is provided? (Chapter IV)

- What are the impacts of the FRCs on families: parents' educational skills? parenting skills and knowledge? social support? children's academic and social skills? (Chapter V)

- What are the impacts of the FRCs on schools: children's behaviors in school? parent involvement? changes in school climate? (Chapter V)

Chapter VI presents a discussion of the patterns observed that reflect the implementation of the FRC service delivery model and implications for delivering comprehensive integrated services to families, and presents recommendations for sustaining the school-based/linked delivery model of the Family Resource Centers at meaningful levels. Much of the discussion follows from findings presented in this evaluation report. Other conclusions and recommendations are based on the evaluation team's collective experiences with the FRCs during the evaluation period and our involvements with similar programs such as Even Start and the Child Opportunity Zone Family Center Initiative (COZ).

Chapter VII presents profiles of each of the 18 Family Resource Centers. As with any project of this magnitude, it is difficult to balance the summary of findings with the specific context of each center. To help get a flavor of the range of FRCs participating in this evaluation project, a profile of each center is provided including description of the setting of the FRC (e.g., rural versus urban, high school versus preschool building), arrangements used to deliver each of the core services to families, primary collaborative arrangements, and the school relationship. These profiles provide the texture for this report. One suggestion to assist the reader in understanding the findings presented in this report is to first read several profiles before reading the remaining chapters.

Finally, this report summarizes over two years of experiences and findings from a variety of interrelated data collection methods, including quantitative data from surveys and the ESS and

qualitative data from focus group discussions and interviews.[3] Throughout this report, results from different methods are interwoven to inform the findings. In some instances, findings are summarized from interviews and at other times findings are based on survey results. Most findings are informed by several methods. Because the findings are reported from several methods and audiences, the reporting unit and size of unit shift throughout the report. For example, descriptive information about the FRCs is usually based on reports from the 18 centers. On the other hand, some of the participant information comes from the ESS, meaning that the findings are based on the number of participants instead of the number of the centers. Information about the source is provided in tables and text. It is important that the reader attend to the different audiences and methods used to build an understanding of the FRC service delivery model and its perceived short-term effects on families and schools.

[3] Previous reports written by RMC Research Corporation for the Connecticut State Department of Education during the two year evaluation period include: *Program Evaluation Model and Instrument Development*, June 1995; *Annual Report of the Outside Evaluation of Connecticut's Family Resource Centers*, (Rev. Ed.) October, 1995; *Connecticut Family Resource Center Outside Evaluation. Draft Preliminary Report*, May 1996.

Chapter II. Describing the Core Services

Chapter II. Describing the Core Services

Each Family Resource Center is expected to design and deliver core services in response to several factors such as needs of the families, the availability of services in the community, funding resources, and staffing patterns. As a result, no two centers provide core services in the same way. For example, hours of operation or ages of participants vary across sites. This chapter of the report begins with a description of the range of operations within the core services across the 18 Family Resource Centers. Excerpts from the comments of FRC administrators and staff, parents, and other stakeholders are provided (in italics) to illustrate some of the summary points for each core service.

Preschool Child Care

- Family Resource Centers providing Preschool Child Care services reported that their programs are available Monday through Friday. Services are provided between 2.5 hours and 12.5 hours a day, with an average of 10 hours per day.
- The number of preschool children enrolled in center services ranges from five to 82 children, with an average enrollment of 33 children.
- Fourteen of the 18 centers (78%) reported that there are children on the program's waiting list.
- Approximately 90% of the young children participating in FRC Preschool Child Care programs are between three and five years of age.
- Three FRCs (17%) provide transportation for Preschool Child Care services.
- Some centers do not provide Preschool Child Care services directly because the services are too costly to maintain, there is not sufficient space, or there are slots available in high quality programs in the community.
- All stakeholders view Preschool Child Care services as critical in meeting the needs of families.

Here is a sample of comments about Preschool Child Care.

> *"Preschool Child Care is most important so that parents can work or get training."*
>
> *"Though our program, families have access to a full range of comprehensive services for their children, child care is both affordable and of high quality, and families interact with others from all socio-economic backgrounds."*

"We found we did not receive many requests from our families for preschool. We reversed our approach by offering services such as financial assistance, staff training, and parent education to existing preschool families and staff."

"We provide subsidies for three and four year olds to attend a program in our school. We also provide partial scholarships for our families to use full-time child care near their jobs or schools."

School Age Child Care

- Family Resource Centers providing services for school age children reported that their programs are available Monday through Friday. On average, services are provided for six hours per day, with a range from one to 11.5 hours per day.
- The number of children enrolled in School Age Child Care services at centers ranges from eight to 150 children, with an average enrollment of 52 students.
- Eight FRCs (44%) reported children on the program's waiting list.
- Fourteen of the FRCs (78%) provide School Age Child Care to children between five and 10 years of age. Ten centers (56%) also reported offering programs for 11-13 year olds.
- Some centers do not provide School Age Child Care services directly because services are offered by a collaborating agency or there is insufficient space and/or funding available.
- Six of the 18 centers (33%) provide transportation.
- Several FRCs provide scholarships for school age children to attend vacation camps and summer all-day camps with recreation departments.

Here is a sample of comments about School Age Child Care.

"The local Y already provides a quality program to schools. Therefore, we chose to collaborate with them to provide a 'sliding scale' scholarship program that allows low and middle-low income families to access services."

"Children are given assistance in their homework and other academic areas. They also are exposed to a variety of cultures and socially enriching experiences. Parents are continuously invited to participate in group discussions and other programs by the FRC."

"Children can get homework help, participate in individual or group activities, and have consistent care."

"We meet the needs of parents by providing a safe and stimulating environment for children. As a result, parents miss fewer work days and children have more social opportunities.

"Parents are able to drop their children off at school on their way to work. Children have a safe environment to be in before and after school."

Families in Training (FIT)

- The most commonly reported FIT programs are play groups, home visits, and parent training/workshops.

- On average, centers offer 3.5 play groups per week that last for about two hours each. The number of children enrolled per center ranges from three to 30 with an average of 17 children. The average number of parents participating in the groups is 12 and the range is from five to 26 parents per center. Most centers offer FIT groups at the FRC or the school. Six of the 18 centers (33%) indicated that they had a waiting list for play groups.

- On average, centers providing home visits meet with an average of seven families per week. Twelve centers (67%) meet with two to four families per week. Home visits tend to last between one and two hours. Fourteen of the 18 centers (78%) conduct the home visit in participants' homes and three of the 18 centers (17%) meet with families individually at the FRC or school.

- On average, Family Resource Centers provide one parent workshop a week that is held for about two hours. Between 17 and 20 parents participate with an average of 12 parents per session. Similar to play groups, most centers (17) offer FIT workshops at the school or the FRC.

- Several stakeholders view Families in Training programs as a critical service because parent workshops and trainings serve as strategies to prevent child abuse, a priority identified by several stakeholders.

- Other FIT programs include teen workshops, developmental screening, craft activities, and field trips.

- Parents are involved in designing parenting workshops, suggesting ideas for field trips, and planning special events. Often parents volunteer to present a topic and bring snacks to share.

- For several centers, Families in Training programs are the entry point for families. Parents then become involved in more FRC services as needed.

Here is a sample of comments about Families in Training.

"Parenting workshops prepare parents for growth, help set expectations of their children, and give developmental information."

"Parent workshops provide peer support and networking."

"Home visits give parents an opportunity to link the home with school activities and provide developmental information, resources, and referrals."

"Providing family support is really driving the program (FRC)."

"We have added new programs — an ongoing monthly meeting with a nutritionist, a Spanish speaking family therapist, a family crafts night, and family concerts. We did a voter registration drive and added summer programs."

"Many more parents are aware of the FRC because of our FIT program. The FIT staff was part of a group appearing on a local radio station to discuss the FIT program, as well as, overall FRC activities."

"Play groups provide parents networking opportunities, a place to share developmental information, time to concentrate on parent/child interactions, and social skills for children."

"We routinely serve 80 families per week in our play groups which offer age-appropriate, meaningful activities for children and weekly child development lessons for parents."

Adult Education

- General Educational Development (GED), English as a Second Language (ESL), and Adult Basic Education (ABE) classes are the most frequently reported Adult Education programs.

- Most centers make arrangements for adult education classes to be held at the FRC or the school.

- On average, Family Resource Centers offer four GED classes, two ESL classes, and four ABE classes per week. Classes tend to be held for two to three hours. The number of adults participating in these classes ranges from two to 100 per center.

- Other needs for Adult Education services identified by parents include: more ESL classes, individual attention, a friendly and accepting environment, day time hours, child care, and transportation. Many centers have adults on their waiting lists for adult education.

Here is a sample of comments about Adult Education.

"If you educate a mother, you educate a child."

"FRC families help determine schedules, suggest curriculum ideas, participate in a support group facilitated by the ESL consultant, and participate in family literacy activities.

"Our programming is on site at the FRC and child care for children ages three to five is free. However, transportation is a problem and child care for children younger than three is needed."

"Our retention rate (for adult education) has increased. We have diversified services to include a support group and a career development group. We have trained additional tutors."

"We have added a job training educator, as well as, a publishing company that allows parents to gain basic and advanced computer skills."

"Adult education classes greatly influence the road to self-sufficiency and increase participation in the educational process of offspring (sic)."

Family Child Care Provider Training

- Newsletters, training, and group meetings are the most frequent types of support and training offered by the FRC for child care providers. Family Resource Centers tend to work collaboratively with INFOLINE and other existing programs to improve the quality of trainings.

- On average, seven newsletters are produced and mailed per year across all centers.

- Centers providing child care training tend to offer an average of six to seven training sessions during the year. These sessions are held for about three hours each with a typical enrollment of 22 people per session. Enrollment size varies from one to 45 participants. The FRC, the school, and other community locations are the sites for training sessions.

- Parents attending other FRC activities help to recruit for the Family Child Care Provider Trainings. Many centers give the newsletter to parents for distribution among their friends.

Here is a sample of comments about Family Child Care Provider Training.

"Newsletters provide awareness information and access to the latest child development and resource information."

"Recruitment and training of providers target low and moderate income areas where residents are in need of less expensive care. In addition, recruiting efforts focus on the needs identified by consumers and potential consumers — part-time care, extended day child care, and emergency/drop in care."

"Trainings enhance the quality of child care, increase the supply of child care providers, provide access to new information, and facilitate collaboration among the FRC, providers, and families."

"Family child care providers are able to access the FRC teaching materials to use in their homes. Classes are provided in collaboration with other neighborhood agencies providing training for child care providers."

"We have a group of 10-12 family child care providers who meet monthly to discuss the profession and the business of child care. The FRC provides a site and a speaker. This year we collaborated with INFOLINE who brought in two experts for several workshops and helped us build our lending library."

Positive Youth Development (PYD)

- Family Resource Centers provide a wide variety of Positive Youth Development (PYD) activities primarily for students in grades four through six including homework and drama clubs, programs that promote healthy social development, computer training, tutors for individuals, and arts and craft activities.

- FRCs collaborate with a wide variety of agencies for the provision of PYD activities such as local youth services, high school health departments, local churches, YMCAs, police departments, community art groups, and local parks and recreation centers.

- Several FRCs indicated that PYD activities are provided through collaborative arrangements with agencies that provide teen pregnancy prevention programs. These programs aim to build self-esteem, discuss pregnancy prevention, and encourage discussion about personal problems in a non-threatening environment.

- Both students and parents are active in planning and designing Positive Youth Development services for the FRCs. For example, parents often teach after-school minicourses for students.

- With funding limitations, many centers offer Positive Youth Development services by referral to other community services or through collaborations such as using parent and teacher volunteers.

Here is a sample of comments about Positive Youth Development.

"A majority of PYD activities are offered as funds are available. The school age children we serve are spread out through the entire district. They are not formally enrolled in our FRC."

"PYD participants come right from school. Our PYD staff person is in touch with school age kids — she runs games at recess and eats lunch with the kids. She has great rapport with them. We spread the word about our program by word of mouth. We always write about FRC programs in the weekly bulletin that goes home to all families."

"Participants are provided topics and activities to choose from. Parents are informed of their children's participation and requested to provide planning input.

"Families are directly involved in our minicourses — parents teach these courses after school and children request to take various classes."

Resource and Referral

- All centers provide Resource and Referral services at least Monday through Friday. On the average, centers provide nine hours of services per day with an range from seven to 11.5 hours per day.

- Sixteen of the 18 centers use the services of INFOLINE (a statewide information and referral service) to provide Resource and Referral services in addition to their own services.

- About half of the centers use an answering machine to obtain messages and questions when the staff is not available.

- Families are made aware of the Resource and Referral services in many ways: flyers in schools, brochures in collaborating agency staff offices, local radio stations, preschool programs, public school teachers, special education coordinators, school secretary, phone book, word of mouth, INFOLINE, local newspapers, and notices through other FRC activities.

Here is a sample of comments about Resource and Referral.

> *"Families in the community have a source to call when they need answers, assistance, or affirmation when they have questions or concerns."*
>
> *"We help families find child care providers; loan parenting books, tapes, and toys; send families to the correct town agencies; provide referrals for food and clothing needs; and families in crisis can be seen by our family therapist."*
>
> *"Referrals that are beneficial for parents have led families to engage in services they may not have been motivated to use before their contact with the FRC."*
>
> *"Positive Resource and Referral experiences for participants help build personal relationships with FRC staff."*
>
> *"Through Resource and Referral, families get answers, direction, feedback, and encouragement."*

Types of Service Delivery Arrangements

Family Resource Centers deliver services to families and children through a variety of arrangements. Some services are offered by the Family Resource Center directly, others by referral only and still other services involve multiple agencies, i.e., the FRC operating in conjunction with collaborating agencies. Family Resource Center services may be provided in local schools and/or at other sites throughout each community. Decisions about the best way to

deliver each service reflect the needs and values of the community, the quality and quantity of existing community services, the organization and climate of the school setting, and the local vision/purpose of the FRC.

This report uses four categories of service arrangements to describe the variety of approaches for delivering services by the FRCs: Direct Administration, Collaboration Approaches, Referral with Support, and Referral Only. These four categories emerged from information gathered by using the Profile Surveys and interviews with FRC administrators and their staff members.

Direct Administration

Core services directly administered by the Family Resource Centers are categorized as Direct Administration. For most centers, this category includes services offered at the center or the school. Staff members providing direct services tend to be supported, at least in part, by funds from the FRC budget. For example, salaries for parent educators working with the Families In Training program frequently are part of the FRC operating budget. Families in Training and Resource and Referral services are the two core services most typically delivered directly by FRCs. (See Exhibit 2.)

Collaboration Approaches

Collaboration refers to arrangements where resources for service provision are shared with an existing community agency. Resources most commonly shared are space and staff. For 15 of the 18 centers, Adult Education is provided through collaborative arrangements. (See Exhibit 2.) Adult Education classes are often arranged by FRCs and taught by staff within the adult education network. The FRCs often provide space for the classes and offer free child care for parents enrolled in the adult education classes.

Referral with Support

Some centers do not provide a core service directly because sufficient services exist in the community or cost is prohibitive. Instead, FRCs may provide access to an agency or agencies by referring families to existing services and offering supports such as full or partial scholarships for children and parents to attend other local programs. This category includes referrals to services with supports for participants. (See Exhibit 2.)

Referral Only

Core services categorized as referral only reflect arrangements used by the Family Resource Centers to recommend families to existing services in the community. In many communities the provision of a core service by the FRC would be a duplication of service. Rather than duplicating existing services, the FRC refers families to appropriate resources to meet their needs. (See Exhibit 2.)

Exhibit 2 shows the multiple arrangements the Family Resource Centers use to deliver each of the core services.

Exhibit 2
Number of Centers Using Service Delivery Arrangements for Core Services
(n = 18 centers)

	Service Arrangements				
Core Services	**Direct Administration**	**Collaboration**	**Referral with Support**	**Referral Only**	**TOTAL**
Preschool Child Care	6	4	1	7	18
School Age Child Care	6	6	2	4	18
Families In Training	17	1	0	0	18
Adult Education	0	15	0	3	18
Family Child Care Provider Training	6	5	0	7	18
Positive Youth Development	4	6	4	4	18
Resource and Referral	18	NA	NA	NA	18

Source: Family Resource Center Profile Survey, 1996 and interviews with FRC administrators, 1996.

- Direct administration is the most common arrangement for providing Families in Training and the only approach for Resource and Referral services. Adult Education is typically implemented in collaboration with others. Most FRCs tap into existing adult education networks in their communities to provide classes.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Referrals with supports are used by a few centers to deliver services for children (e.g., Preschool Child Care, School Age Child Care, and Positive Youth Development activities). This type of arrangement is not used to deliver core services for adults (e.g., Adult Education, Family Child Care Provider Training, and Families in Training).

Funding

In this section of the report information is provided about financial resources managed by the FRCs in fiscal year 1996 (September 1, 1995 to August 31, 1996). To gain a better understanding of funding differences between centers funded prior to the three-year federal demonstration grant and centers that were first funded by the grant, we have divided the FRCs into two groups. These comparisons provide information about the differences between centers with programs that had been in operation (established) and centers in the process of developing programs (new). The terms "established" and "new" are used in this report to refer to the two groups of Family Resource Centers.

Exhibit 3 shows the funding amounts managed by each of the two groups and the total for all centers.

Exhibit 3
Family Resource Center Funding, FY 96
(n = 18 centers)

Funding Group	Range of Funding	Mean	Median
"Established" FRCs Funded Before 1994 (n = 9)	$142,466-$556,564	$255,159	$200,300
"New" FRCs Funded In 1994 (n = 9)	$74,000-$353,600	$183,815	$143,100
TOTAL	$74,000-$556,564	$219,487	$183,950

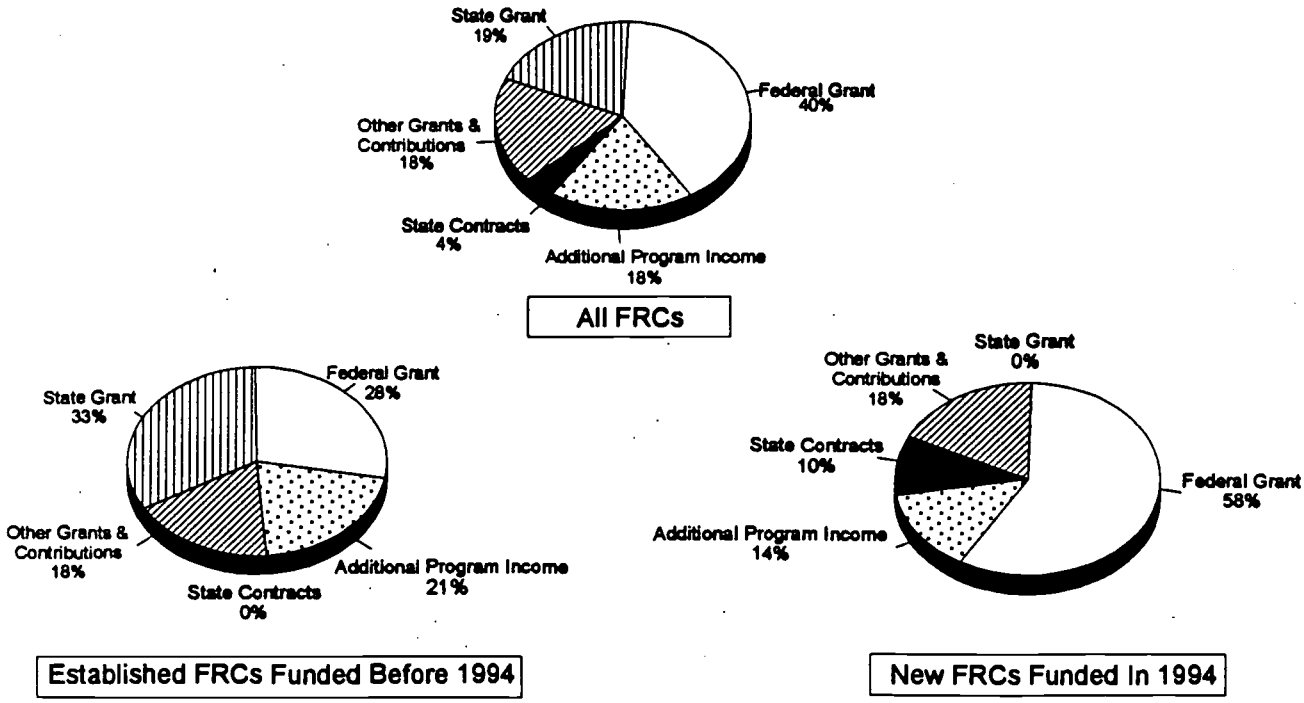
Source: Family Resource Center Funding Survey, 1996.

Established centers with operating programs managed a larger budget than new centers. The average amount of funding managed by established centers was $71,344 more annually than the average amount administered by new centers.

Funding Sources

Family Resource Center services are supported from several funding sources: federal FRC grants, state FRC grants, state contracts (e.g., social services), program income (e.g., child care fees), and/or other grants and contributions. Family Resource Centers try continually to diversify funding in order to expand services and replace funds that are terminating. Funding diversity poses the challenge of managing multiple grants, often on different funding cycles and with varied reporting requirements. The distribution of funding sources for all the FRCs and by each of the two groups is presented in Exhibit 4.

Exhibit 4
*Family Resource Center Funding Sources, FY 96**
(n = 18 centers)



Source: Family Resource Center Funding Survey, 1996.
*Percents may not total 100% due to rounding.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

- Family Resource Center grants were the largest funding source for both groups of centers. In FY 96, state and federal FRC grants together provided over 60% of the funding for established FRCs. New Family Resource Centers received funding from FRC federal grants only, 58% of their funding.

- The contribution of additional income from program fees was higher for established FRCs than new FRCs with developing programs. For established FRCs, additional program income provided over 20% of their funding. Five of the 18 FRCs specifically listed child care fees as a source of income. Other centers may be receiving child care fees, but did not report these fees in the Funding Survey.

- State contracts with social service agencies and adult education programs provided 10% of funding support for new FRCs.

- The amount of funding received from other grants and contributions ranged from $500 to $110,000. Sources included fundraisers, the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, United Way, IBM, and City of Hartford Priority Initiative.

Expenditures

There is a wide variation in how FRCs allocate funds across administrative costs and costs associated with delivering the core services. This variation reflects the local focus of the centers and the collaborations and cooperative agreements with community service providers. Since each FRC is expected to deliver the core services within the context of community needs and resource availability, there is no typical pattern of allocating funds across services.

Sixteen FRCs provided information about administrative costs and costs for delivery of services. Exhibit 5 displays the distribution of funds for administration and core services.

Exhibit 5
Family Resource Center Expenditures, FY 96
(n = 16 centers[1])

Services	Percent of Total Budget
Administration/Coordination of Services*	21%
Preschool Child Care	28%
School Age Child Care	15%
Families In Training	13%
Adult Education	4%
Family Child Care Provider Training	2%
Positive Youth Development	7%
Resource and Referral	4%
Other**	6%
TOTAL	100%

Source: Family Resource Center Funding Survey, 1996.
*Hereafter, Administration/Coordination of Services is referred to as Administration.
**Other includes parenting activities, parent education programs, and leadership trainings.

- Slightly over one-fifth (21%) of Family Resource Center expenses was spent for Program Administration including program management, staff development, coordinating resource referral sources, building collaborative linkages with agencies, and program planning.

- Forty-three percent (43%) of FRC funds was spent for child care services including 28% for Preschool Child Care and 15% for School Age Child Care.

Exhibit 6 presents the distribution of budget funds for each of the two FRC groups and shows the range of expenses for each core service.

[1] Data were available from 16 Family Resource Centers.

Exhibit 6
Family Resource Center Expenditures by Funding Group, FY 96
(n = 16 centers[2])

	"Established" FRCs Funded Before 1994 (n = 9)			"New" FRCs Funded in 1994 (n = 7)		
Services	**Amount**	**Percent of Total Expenditure**	**Range of Expenses**	**Amount**	**Percent of Total Expenditure**	**Range of Expenses**
Administration	$449,874	19%	$22,261-$70,000	$297,150	24%	$10,000-$120,000
Preschool Child Care	$920,000	40%	$6,000-$327,549	$63,000	5%	$1,000-$27,000
School Age Child Care	$290,600	13%	$6,000-$75,300	$231,057	19%	$1,000-$170,057
Families In Training	$312,057	14%	$1,000-$46,000	$153,500	13%	$5,000-$53,000
Adult Education	$39,605	2%	$5,600-$91,000	$105,115	9%	$6,000-$45,000
Family Child Care Provider Training	$42,567	2%	$500-$10,800	$13,900	1%	$2,000-$36,500
Positive Youth Development	$75,770	3%	$1,000-$12,500	$168,000	14%	$1,000-$5,900
Resource and Referral	$79,959	3%	$1,000-$27,828	$73,066	6%	$2,000-$44,566
Other*	$101,001	4%	$101,001	$112,847	9%	$8,000-$104,847
TOTAL	$2,311,433	100%		$1,217,635	100%	

Source: Family Resource Center Funding Survey, 1996.
*Other includes parenting activities, parent education programs, and leadership trainings.

[2] Data were available from 16 Family Resource Centers.

The percentage of budget expenses for preschool child care services was substantively greater for established FRCs than for new centers, 40% versus 5%, respectively. In contrast, new FRCs allocated a greater percentage of budget expenses to school age services such as School Age Child Care and Positive Youth Development compared to established centers. One factor that may account for these differences is the institutional sources of FRC funds supporting the centers. Centers funded prior to the federal demonstration project received their funding initially from the Department of Human Resources. With these funds came a program emphasis on developing preschool child care services. In contrast, the nine new centers funded by the federal demonstration grant received their funding from the Department of Education. These funds were earmarked for developing family support programs linked to public schools or located in public school buildings. In many cases, the new centers collaborated with existing school programs as a means to becoming established in the community and building FRC support.

The percentage of budget expenses for administration was somewhat greater in 1996 for new FRCs in the process of developing programs compared to long-established centers. Higher administrative costs are associated with costs for program start-up.

Costs Per Participant

Participant costs were estimated for six core services using information reported on the Budget Survey and enrollment data gathered from the Evaluation Support System. The figures presented in Exhibit 7 represent estimated costs paid by FRCs for a year's worth of service. There are several reasons for interpreting these estimates with caution. First, information for calculating participant costs was not available from all centers. Second, the direct collection of participant costs was not an explicit task of the evaluation and the instruments were not designed to do so (e.g., service intensity is not included). Instead, data used to calculate this information were gathered from expenses reported and enrollment numbers.

Participant cost estimates are shown by two types of service delivery arrangements, direct administration and collaboration. Since data were not available for all centers, information is presented only when more than one center reported data.

Exhibit 7
Costs Per Participant for Core Services by Service Delivery Arrangements, FY 96

	Service Delivery Arrangements	
Core Services	**Direct**	**Collaboration**
Preschool Child Care	$1,261.15* $900 - $1,574** (n = 3)***	$1,572.75 $583 - $3,375 (n = 4)
School Age Child Care	$539.74 $148 - $902 (n = 4)	$1,335.71 $86 - $4,000 (n = 4)
Families In Training	$237.73 $1.00 - $104 (n = 11)	NA
Adult Education	NA	$919.00 $145 - $2,750 (n = 12)
Positive Youth Development	$528.02 $36 - $1,243 (n = 4)	$1,213.16 $156 - $3,312 (n = 3)
Resource and Referral	$39.37 $1.00 - $104 (n = 11)	NA

Source: Family Resource Center Funding Survey, 1996 and the Evaluation Support System (ESS), 1996.
*Mean cost per participant.
**Range of cost per participant across centers.
***Number of centers.

It is interesting to note that the mean cost for delivering services collaboratively was higher than delivering services directly or as a referral. One explanation is that collaborative arrangements, in contrast to the other types of arrangements, often involve fixed contract amounts with community agencies.

In-kind Contributions

In-kind contributions are an important source of support for Family Resource Centers. Each FRC administrator provided information about the in-kind contributions received and an estimated dollar amount of the support. Each administrator also indicated the source of the in-kind contribution: school district only, community agency or agencies only, or a combination of school

district and community agencies. Exhibit 8 shows a list of the in-kind contributions received, source of support, and range of financial values given for each contribution. Capital expenditures received as in-kind contributions were excluded (e.g., building renovations, large equipment). Several administrators were unable to provide a dollar value for the in-kind contributions received.

Exhibit 8
In-kind Contributions to Connecticut Family Resource Centers, FY 96
(n = 18 centers)

Type of In-kind Contributions	School District Only	Community Agencies Only	Both School District & Community Agencies	Range of Values of In-kind Contributors
Building renovation	8	1	0	$3,000 - $30,000
Classroom or meeting space	10	0	5	$2,000 - $72,000
Office space	10	0	4	$800 - $90,600
Utilities	8	1	4	$600 - $20,000
Telephone	3	2	1	$500 - $1,000
Transportation	5	2		$500 - $23,400
Administrative Supplies	5	2	1	$600 - $1,000
Classroom/Program Materials	5	1	3	$200 - $63,000
Snacks/Food	0	3	1	$1,200 - $2,788
Promotional Expenses	5	1	1	$500
Professional Development for Staff or Volunteers	4	4	3	$800 - $3,200
FRC Administrator's Salary	2	1	0	$26,400
Supervision	5	1	2	$300 - $10,000
Teachers	2	3		$520 - $39,000
Nurse	10	1	1	$600 - $16,000
Social worker/ Com. Outreach	7	4	1	$500 - $55,000
Accounting/Bookkeeping	9	3	0	$1,000 - $10,025
Secretarial or Administrative	3	4	0	$1,000 - $9,000
After School Security	8	1	0	$4,000 - $6,000
Cleaning Maintenance	11	1	0	$500 - $12,000
Positive Youth Development	3	5	2	$5,000 - $30,000
Child Care	3	2	0	no values provided
Special Education	2	0	0	$2,000
Adult Education	4	3	0	$5,000 - $20,000
Food Service	2	2	0	$2,788
Other	2	1	1	$4,500 - $89,000

Source: Family Resource Center Funding Survey, 1996.

- On average, each administrator listed 11 types of in-kind contributions, ranging from five to 23 types of support.

- Comparisons between established and new FRCs showed little difference in the average number of in-kind contributions received, 12 types and 11 types, respectively. The average value of in-kind contributions for new centers (n=4) was $77,512 and the average value for established centers (n=6) was $83,635.

- School districts were more likely than community agencies to provide contributions in the form of facility support such as office space, classroom and meeting space, cleaning maintenance, and security services. Other contributions frequently received from school districts included accounting and bookkeeping services and access to the school nurse.

- The most common in-kind contributions received from community agencies were Positive Youth Development programs, professional development, and social worker, secretarial, and administrative support.

- The total value of in-kind contributions to individual FRCs ranged from $2,240 to $269,600.

- In terms of the overall funding picture for FRCs in FY 96, in-kind contributions ranged from less than one percent to 78% of the total funding support. Total funding support includes financial sources such as grants, contributions, and program income plus the value of in-kind contributions received. On average, in-kind contributions provided 20% of total funding support for new centers and 17% of total support for established centers.

Staffing

Family Resource Centers have a variety of staffing arrangements depending on funding and collaborative relationships. Staff members may wear "multiple hats" in a Family Resource Center, and some work only part-time. Also some may work part-time in non-FRC related activities in the same facility.

Administrators

Thirteen of the 18 administrators work full-time administering Family Resource Center programs. Federal and state Family Resource Center funds support the full salary of eight of these 13 full-time administrators. Salaries for the other full-time administrators are funded in part by Family Resource Center resources and in part by other means (e.g., adult education program, school district funds). Several of the part-time administrators work full-time, but have other responsibilities for the other half of their time. For example, one administrator works part-time as the FRC administrator and the other half-time in a school district administrative position.

Sixteen of the 18 administrators have full benefits packages with their positions. One administrator receives only vacation and holiday time; another administrator receives no benefits. Most part-time administrators have full-time positions, combining FRC administration responsibilities with other obligations. Thus, most part-time administrators are eligible for benefits.

As a group, the FRC administrators are well educated and have many years of professional experience in the areas they direct, teach, or assist. Fifteen of the administrators have master's degrees, two have bachelor's degrees, and one administrator has a doctorate. Five administrators have five to 10 years experience and two have one to five years of experience. To keep abreast of their field, 10 administrators reported attending two to four days of in-service training during FY 96, two reported five to ten days, and five administrators indicated eleven or more days of training.

Part-time and Full-time Staff

The number of part-time and full-time staff members (other than FRC administrators) paid by FRC funds is shown in Exhibit 9 by each of the two funding groups, along with the total for all centers.

Exhibit 9
Full- and Part-time Staff Members Paid by Family Resource Center Funds

Funding Group	Number of Employees	Range of FRC Employees Per Center	Average Number of Employees Per Center
"Established" FRCs Funded Before 1994 (n = 9)*			
Full-time	32	1 - 7	4
Part-time	51	0 - 17	6
"New" FRCs Funded After 1994 (n = 9)			
Full-time	8	0 - 3	1
Part-time	38	1 - 8	4
TOTAL (n = 18)			
Full-time	40	0 - 7	2
Part-time	89	0 - 17	5

Source: Family Resource Center Staffing Survey, 1996.
*Number of centers.

In general, established FRCs with operating programs have more employees than new centers. All Family Resource Centers have more part-time than full-time employees. In part, this is a result of the need to staff a multitude of services, many of which do not require staffing for the number of hours of most full-time positions. These services include School Age Child Care, Positive Youth Development programs, and some of the adult education programs. The need for part-time employees is also the result of staffing programs which operate for more than eight hours a day such as the Preschool Child Care program. This program necessitates hiring more than one person to provide coverage over the twelve hours a day the program is in operation.

The preponderance of part-time jobs and the lack of benefits for these jobs were frequently mentioned by FRC administrators as concerns and as reasons for staff turnover. FRC employees leave to take higher paying jobs, full-time jobs, and jobs with benefits. Staff turnover especially is a critical issue in preschool programs and affects the ability of the centers to provide consistent caregiving attention.

Part-time and full-time staff members paid by FRC include Program Coordinators/Teachers for core services, Parent Educators (play specialists, home visitors, family therapists), and Paraprofessionals (secretaries, aides, non-certified personnel). On average, most centers fund

two or three staff within each category. (See Exhibit 10.)

Exhibit 10
Primary Job Category of Family Resource Center Staff Members
(n = 18 centers)

Job Category	Number of FRCs Reporting Staff Members	Average Number of Staff Members per Center in Job Category	Range of Staff Members per Center in Job Category
Program Coordinator/Teacher	16	3	1-8
Parent Educator	17	2	1-5
Paraprofessional	15	3	1-16

Source: Family Resource Center Staffing Survey, 1996.

The education level and professional experience of FRC staff members vary by position. Exhibit 11 shows the highest education level attained by FRC employees by job category.

Exhibit 11
*Education Level of Family Resource Center Staff Members**
(n = 18 centers)

Highest Level of Education	FRC Staff Members					
	Program Coordinator/ Teacher		Parent Educator		Paraprofessional	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
High school diploma or GED	13	24%	2	5%	30	68%
AA	10	19%	5	13%	10	23%
BA/BS	16	30%	16	40%	3	7%
MA/MS/MEd	15	28%	17	42%	1	2%
PhD/EdD	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
TOTAL*	54		40		44	

Source: Family Resource Center Staffing Survey, 1996.
*The total number of staff members reported in this exhibit is higher than the number reported in Exhibit 9 due to incomplete information about some staff members.

More than 50% of program coordinators/teachers and 82% of parent educators have a bachelor's or master's degrees. Most of the paraprofessionals working in the FRCs have a high school diploma, GED, or an associate's degree.

Several staff members reported that they also have special certification or endorsements: 38% (21) of program coordinators/teachers, 47% (19) of parent educators, and 36% (16) of paraprofessionals. Most FRC staff have one to five years of professional experience. Program coordinators/teachers were more likely to report over five years of experience than parent educators or paraprofessionals. FRC administrators reported that most staff receive two to five days of training annually.

Volunteers

Volunteers are used in all the core services and to help with administrative tasks, such as answering the telephone. Volunteers are a resource that the FRCs can and do use to provide additional services. Volunteering also benefits the individual by providing an opportunity to learn new skills, to share skills with others, and to gain work experience. Exhibit 12 illustrates how volunteers are involved with all of the core services, as well as with administrative tasks.

Exhibit 12
Use of Volunteers in Family Resource Centers
(n = 18 centers)

Services	Number of Centers Using Volunteers	Range of Volunteers per Site
FRC Administration	8	1-4
Preschool Child Care	7	1-6
School Age Child Care	9	1-20
Families in Training	9	1-10
Adult Education	7	1-10
Family Child Care Provider Training	4	1-8
Positive Youth Development	9	1-35
Resource and Referral	6	1-15
General Support	5	1-15

Source: Family Resource Center Staffing Survey, 1996.

- Every center reports using volunteers in one or many services. The most frequent use of volunteers is with activities with school age children. Programs with school age children lend themselves to attracting volunteers because volunteers may come for one event or a series of events and working with school age children is quite gratifying.

Any service can serve as an entry point for a family member, but a staff member or volunteer is a parent or child's first contact at a Family Resource Center. The staff person or volunteer must be welcoming, accepting, and eager to engage the parent or child into a conversation in person or by telephone about what happens at the center or in a particular program that might be of interest and benefit. Once enrolled in a Family Resource Center service, an entire array of services and programs becomes available to the entire family. The core services have been described in this chapter; Chapter III describes the context in which these core services occur (i.e., in a school). The Family Resource administrative office is usually the primary point of access and information for families; the atmosphere and physical comfort of that office is as important for a family as the staff person who greets them. The importance of the school setting will be discussed in Chapter III, as well as, the factors influencing the relationships with schools and collaborators.

Chapter III. Describing the Context

Chapter III. Describing the Context

The relationships of the Family Resource Centers with the school and with the broader community shape the context in which the FRCs operate and deliver services. Besides providing the basic framework for service delivery, this context informs the dynamics among participants (e.g., FRC staff, school staff, parents, children, and collaborating partners) and influences the use and effects of the services. The important components of the FRC context are 1) the school setting, 2) relationships with the fiscal agents, 3) opportunities for collaboration to expand relationships and improve integrated services for families, and 4) schedule of service programs.

School Setting

The collaborative relationship between a Family Resource Center and the school district(s) is determined locally: "The model does not require that family support and child care be incorporated into the educational system, but rather enables the provision of such services under the auspices of the school. The school is an institution that is known and recognized by, and accessible to all families."[1]

The extent of the relationship with the school district varies across the 18 centers. At a minimum, school districts provide some space for FRC services. On the other hand, a school system can support an FRC to such an extent that space, funding, staff, and programs are virtually indistinguishable from the rest of the school. Agreed upon arrangements shape the type and quality of relationship that develops between FRCs and schools. This relationship, in turn, affects the delivery of the FRC services.

Five dimensions of the school setting are discussed here. The first four are descriptive of the setting: 1) the number of schools linked to Family Resource Centers, 2) the location of the Family Resource Centers, 3) communication patterns between FRC and school staff, and 4) referrals to the FRC from school staff. The fifth is a summary of reflections by school personnel, stakeholders, and parents about the school setting as a context for FRCs.

[1] Source: Connecticut State Department of Education brochure for Family Resource Centers.

Number of Schools Linked to Family Resource Centers

The eighteen Family Resource Centers serve a total of 52 schools. The FRCs do not necessarily serve all the schools in their respective districts. In some cases, FRCs are expected to serve the entire district, spreading their services among a number of schools. Twelve of the 18 FRCs each serve two to five schools. In the other six districts, the FRC operates more as a demonstration project, testing out services in one school that may eventually be offered to other schools in the district. Five FRCs serve children and families from a single elementary school. One FRC operates as a collaborative among four school districts, serving six schools across the districts.

Location of the Family Resource Centers

All Family Resource Centers provide some services to children and families in the kindergarten-grade 8 school buildings in their communities. Services can be centralized in one location (for example, at a school building) or spread among several community locations such as a community center, local child care center, or community college. Along with the physical space that school districts provide to the FRCs are related in-kind supports critical to the functioning of the FRCs: utilities, cleaning and maintenance, furniture, and supplies. These in-kind contributions are detailed in Chapter II. Although the extent of these contributions varies from site to site, they provide daily reminders, particularly to the FRC staff members who are the primary beneficiaries of these supports, of the relationship between FRCs and schools.

Of the 18 FRCs, 12 are considered *school-based*, that is, they have their administrative offices physically located in a kindergarten-grade 8 school building. Other FRCs are classified as *school-linked*; administrative offices of three FRCs are located in district-owned buildings other than kindergarten-grade 8 school buildings such as a preschool building. The remaining three FRCs have offices located in a community-based organization such as a private early child care agency or a health facility.

Each FRC administrative office serves as the primary point of access and intake into the FRC service delivery system. Although information may be provided at other program sites, this office is the central place where families, school staff members, and community collaborators call or meet with the FRC administrator and the staff at their administrative offices to learn about FRC services. There usually is meeting space for staff members and parents to use for casual social gatherings or for classes and workshops. Children's toys and play areas are often available at the administrative offices for parents with young children. One FRC administrator refers to the office

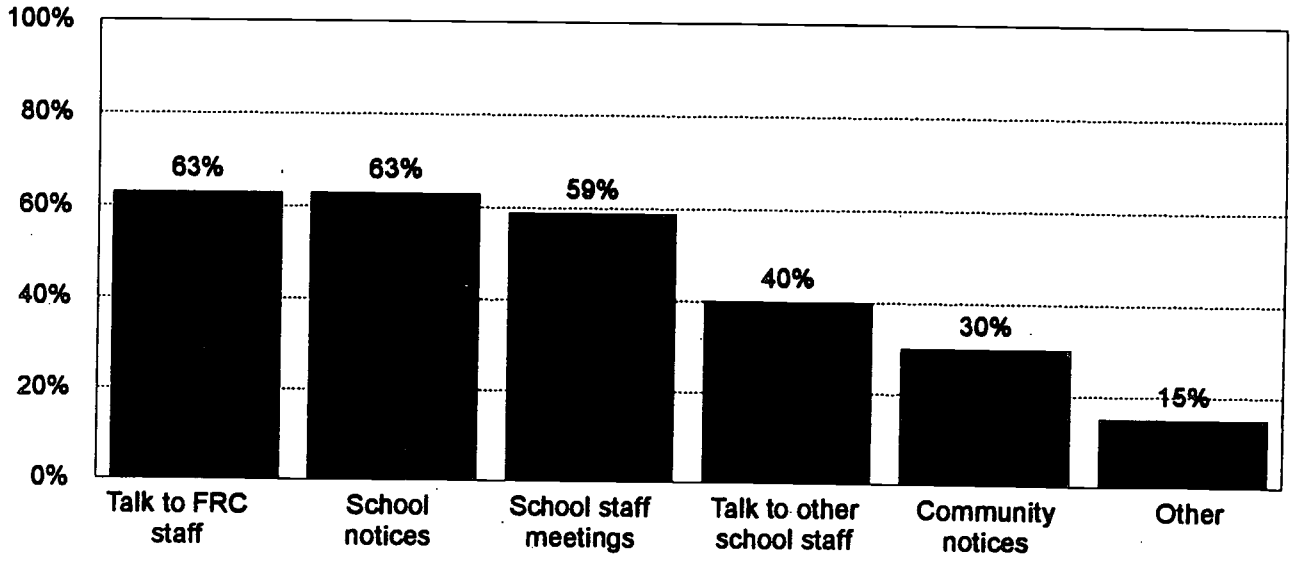
as the "parents' home away from home." If the office is physically a part of a school building, then the link between the FRC and the school is made more obvious than it may be for those FRCs that are only linked fiscally to school buildings.

Communication Between FRC and School Staff Members

A critical component of the relationship that develops between an FRC and its school district is the communication and contact that occurs among staff members. FRC administrators and staff reported that frequent opportunities to meet make it more likely that the problems and needs of the FRC, the school, and families receiving services will be addressed and resolved.

An important first step in this relationship building process is for school staff members to become aware of the FRC and its programs. In the School Staff Survey, teachers and other school personnel were asked how they learn about Family Resource Center services. Exhibit 13 shows their responses.

Exhibit 13
How School Staff Members Find Out About Family Resource Center Services
(n = 295 school staff members)

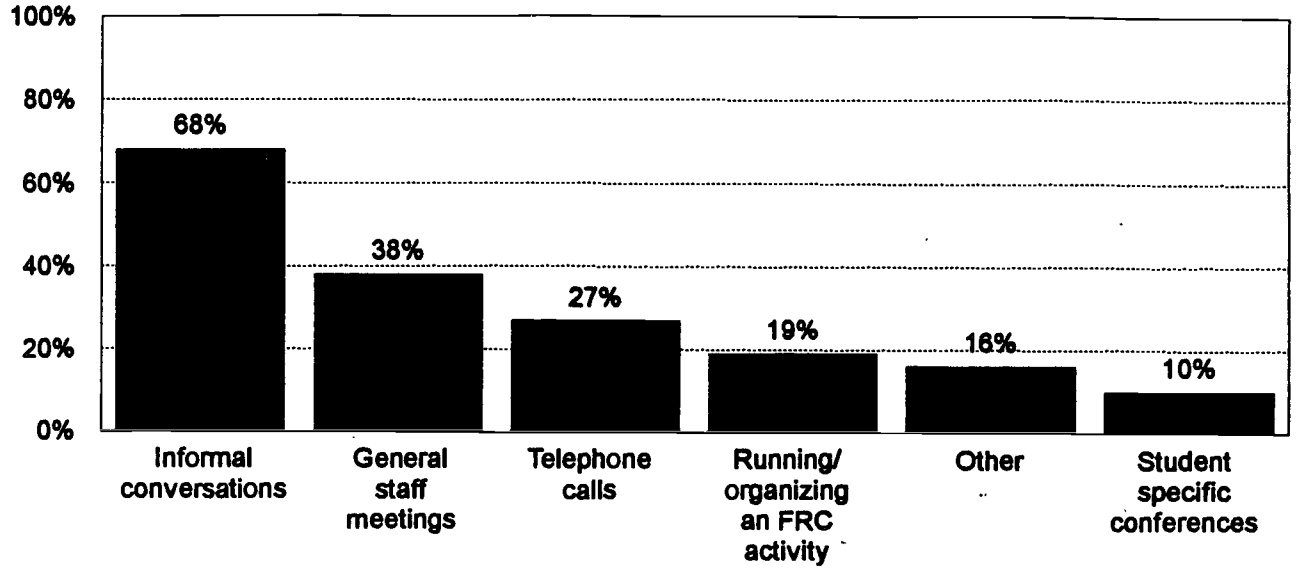


Source: School Staff Survey, 1996.

- More than half of the school staff members reported learning about the FRC through three sources: through talking to FRC staff (63%), reading FRC notices (63%), and at staff meetings (59%).

Once the school staff are aware of the FRC, there are a variety of ways they are in contact with the FRC staff, as shown in Exhibit 14.

Exhibit 14
School Staff Contact With Family Resource Center Staff Members
(n = 295 school staff members)



Source: School Staff Survey, 1996.

School staff members reported having the most contact with the FRC staff through informal conversations. During site visits at several FRCs, staff members told RMC that teachers and FRC personnel often encounter each other in the halls where they informally discuss the services needed by students and their families. These unplanned meetings sometimes lead to more formal meetings. School staff members also said that they are likely to connect when FRC staff members participate in school-related committees and meetings, for example, school improvement or governance committees and special education assessment meetings.

FRC staff members described their contacts with the school staff in the Profile Survey. They reported that they had the most frequent contact with school principals. FRC administrators acknowledged that principals are the most likely to make decisions about issues of space, resources, and other needs of an FRC located in one of their buildings. Principals are also in an important position to influence the relationship that develops between the FRCs and the schools, and thus are able to facilitate relationships with other school personnel.

All FRC staff members reported at least some contact with classroom teachers. Because teachers are a critical source of referrals to the center, these contacts can be important in building family participation in FRC services. In addition to teachers, FRC personnel said they have contact with social workers, guidance counselors, school nurses, custodians, parent involvement coordinators, school secretaries, special education staff, school psychologists, preschool staff, school aides, and assistant principals. All are potential sources of information, referral, and support for the FRC.

Referrals from the School Staff to the Family Resource Center

The referral process is an important link between the FRC and the school staff. During site visits at FRCs where the school staff actively referred students and their families to the FRC, both school and FRC personnel said that the referral process benefits the school, the FRC, and the family. The school staff benefits by being able to turn over family problems and needs to the FRC that are outside the scope of its usual academic responsibilities. This strategy allows the teachers and other professionals to have more time to teach while giving them confidence that other problems are being addressed by someone else with the appropriate authority to handle them. In discussions with teachers, many acknowledged the added support the FRC gives to "already over-burdened teachers as well as families."

More than half (168) of the School Staff Survey respondents (n=295) said they referred children and/or their families for FRC services. One-third of them referred more than four families to FRC services during the year. Almost one-third reported that they referred children and parents to a child care service, either Preschool or School Age Child Care. Families In Training received the most referrals of any one of the core services.

Using responses from the School Staff Survey, those school personnel who referred children and families to the FRCs were compared to those who had not made referrals. Staff members who made referrals were more likely than other personnel to talk directly, frequently, informally, and formally at meetings and about student conferences with FRC staff members. They also reported contact with FRC staff at FRC-sponsored activities in the school. These school personnel were also more likely to be satisfied with FRC services, say that they support the presence and work of the FRC in their school, and perceive a high impact of FRC services in their school community.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Perceptions of the School Setting for an FRC

Focus group discussions and interviews with school staff, parents, and stakeholders provided information about the strengths of the school setting for a Family Resource Center as well as related concerns. Below are comments from several school staff members that spoke of the value of the FRC to the school.

> *"The FRC is a key component to the success in our school. I can't imagine not having them. The FRC gives students and families opportunities/information that they may not have ever encountered before that strengthen them."*

> *"The FRC is just another family, like another classroom. They are the roots and the wings. They connect everyone in the building."*

Stakeholders, especially, see the school setting as a critical connection for the FRCs to 1) reach more families, 2) assist in transitioning young children into school, and 3) support children's educational success. Several mentioned that the Family Resource Center is a means of improving children's educational achievement: "People need to understand the connection to student success." They pointed to superintendents and principals who need to support the mission of the FRCs and understand the link between FRCs and "the success of student achievement." With their support, the FRCs will "gain visible space in the schools" which this group of stakeholders felt was key to FRC success. They believe that FRCs not located in schools will have trouble getting the support they need from the schools.

Space within the school is a concern. Some school staff remarked that " the FRC is taking up needed space." But, one principal lamented the lack of school space for the FRC: "I wish I could have the FRC in my building...[without] it makes it difficult to talk about sharing training and making appropriate referrals." Many school staff members expect that concerns about space will continue to grow as the demands for FRC activities continue to increase.

Several principals and teachers see the benefit of the FRC to the school as enhancing relationships between schools and families. Staff members spoke of the FRCs as contributing to the relationship between the school and families: "I believe that it definitely adds to the school climate and helps the whole family to be involved in education." The FRC is another "avenue to bring parents into the school."

Relationships with Fiscal Agents

Another important collaborative relationship for most of the Family Resource Centers is with their fiscal agents for the FRC grant. While a school or school district was required to be one of the FRC applicant entities, it was not required to be the fiscal agent. All applicants for FRC funding were encouraged to include a variety of community organizations in planning and implementing the FRC. Some FRCs partnered with an existing umbrella organization that included many community organizations, while other FRCs created coalitions of local organizations for the specific purpose of developing the FRC grant application. Half of the FRCs have school districts as fiscal agents, while funding for the other nine FRCs goes through a community organization partner.

During site visits, FRC, school, and agency staff members involved in the FRC's early development commented that the decision about the fiscal agent was guided by the structure of the organization and the desire for minimal bureaucracy. It was assumed that a flexible organization was necessary to work with the diverse programs offered by the FRC. Several FRC administrators mentioned that the mismatch between school district budgeting and the fiscal needs of the FRC led to the choice of a community agency as the fiscal agent. Many principals also agreed that fiscal management is less complicated if a community-based organization is the fiscal agent.

> *"Fiscal management is hard. Auditing systems (in the school) do not lend themselves to managing those funds in the way they are intended to be used."*

Factors that influence the strength of the relationship between the FRC and the fiscal agent include the commitment of the fiscal agent to the Family Resource Center concept, the service focus of the fiscal agent, the working relationship between the FRC and the agency that serves as fiscal agent, and the availability to the FRC of additional start-up revenue and resources. Many FRCs receive additional resources from the fiscal agent in the form of in-kind contributions.

Opportunities for Collaboration

In conjunction with building and maintaining relationships with the school staff members and fiscal agents, the FRCs have a range of collaborations with other agencies.

Collaboration and collaborative programs are believed to be efficient and cost-effective means to link families with family support and child development services. One agency may not have the

funds or resources to serve the range of family needs. Through partnerships with other agencies, the resources are tapped to respond to previously unserved needs.

Some agencies, institutions, and foundations provide funding to support specific programs that they want to see implemented in a community. Other collaborations are more complex, involving shared costs, personnel, space, and materials such as jointly designed intake forms and referral protocols. In some cases collaborations evolve from FRC staff and other agency staff members writing a grant together to support a new program. In others, collaborations are ad hoc, for example, when an FRC has an immediate need and reaches out to an agency that is able to respond immediately with resources to meet it. Collaborations may be short-term or extended commitments between partners.

Partnering agencies often bring to collaborations commitments to particular programs or philosophical approaches. Rather than sharing programs, staff, space, and resources with the FRC, they are primarily interested in providing a specific service to FRC clients. Although all the FRCs can document extensive partnerships, interviews with FRC staff and observations during site visits indicate that most of their collaborations involve service exchanges of this nature.

Existing networks

Some FRCs have found that building on existing networks of agencies can expand the opportunities for collaboration. These partnerships often have the advantage of building on pre-existing working relationships within existing community support systems. The planning group that writes the FRC grant can be a source of multiple networks for the FRC administrator.

All of the 18 FRCs use a networking strategy to provide Resource and Referral services. For example, they tap into existing adult education networks in their communities to provide Adult Education classes either collaboratively or through their Resource and Referral contacts. Networks of child care providers are critical to providing referrals for child care; community-based youth services and other groups are tapped through networking to identify Positive Youth Development opportunities. Sixteen of the 18 centers collaborate with the most formal network of service providers, INFOLINE, which can link the FRCs with extensive resources throughout the community. In the process of using these networks for referrals, the FRCs increase their contact with providers throughout the community and help to maintain and promote their collaborative relationships.

Agreements

Collaborations can be quite formal, with commitments placed in written documents, or informal, as simple verbal agreements. Formal agreements may include descriptions of services each collaborator offers, designation of roles and contacts, fiscal arrangements, length of agreement and option for renewal, communication mechanisms, and expectations for problem-solving. These agreements usually assume a common understanding of service goals and activities.

FRC administrators reported information about their formal agreements in the Profile Survey. Half of the 18 FRCs have formal agreements with Adult Education providers, and seven have developed formal agreements with collaborators for School Age Child Care and Positive Youth Development services. FRCs that use formal letters of agreement reported several benefits. The formal agreement "avoids surprises and possible misunderstandings." It prevents "confusion associated with duplication of services...[through] unambiguous division of responsibilities," and makes "both parties clear about roles, responsibility, and commitment."

Other collaborations are informal, particularly among partners who share space in buildings or are in frequent communication with each other. FRC staff members reported satisfaction with informal collaborative arrangements and said, "informal collaboration allows for flexibility, less red tape" and supports "mutually beneficial exchange of service."

> *"The preschool program is right across the hall. We are constantly in and out of each other's programs. Letters have never seemed necessary. Our relationship is a good, strong one though informal."*

Advisory Committee

One mechanism for fostering and supporting collaboration is the Advisory Committee. For many Family Resource Centers, the committee is an organizational forum for the engagement of collaborating partners and parents to inform the direction and actions of the center. Sixteen centers reported having Advisory Committees, and all but two of them reported regular monthly meetings with committee members.

Members generally reflect the racial, linguistic, and cultural make-up of their communities. FRC staff members report that having strong agency networks in the community helps them obtain a broad representation of social service agencies, as well as local officials and school district personnel. Some Family Resource Centers reported that parent participation in Advisory Committees is difficult to maintain because parents are not comfortable in formal settings.

The functions of these Advisory Committees vary across sites. Some committees are active in public relations and fundraising efforts. Others monitor the delivery of services. Still others work to ensure that the Family Resource Centers are responsive to community needs. Several centers report that the function of the Advisory Committee has changed over time to become a more integral part of the FRC administration. FRC administrators say the purpose of the Advisory Committee is to "...support program and staff in accomplishment of goals," "...identify new resources, act... as a sounding board for new ideas and programs," and "... link with community and school board representatives." On the other hand, some FRC staff members report that Committee members, particularly parents, often lack the self-confidence to carry out these tasks and need ongoing training and support. Therefore, some centers provide support and training to parents to participate on committees.

Communication

The most common strategy used by the Family Resource Centers for keeping collaborating partners informed is joint staff meetings. Ten Family Resource Centers have regularly scheduled meetings with staff members from other schools and collaborating agencies; these meetings tend to occur on a monthly basis. Meeting times need to be valued and have a high priority among all on the staff.

> *"You need to see meetings as enhancing your job; if you use meeting time effectively and efficiently, your job is enhanced."*

Getting staff members from the different core services together for meetings provides opportunities for them to learn about each other and their programs, identify opportunities to share resources, discuss and resolve situations concerning families receiving multiple services, and work together to plan, develop, and coordinate their services. Interviews indicated that opportunities for both formal and informal meetings produce shared knowledge and build trust and cohesiveness within the FRC. Personnel are more likely to describe themselves as a unit or network. When they have less contact with each other, they are more likely to make decisions on their own without consideration of efficiencies that could be gained by working with other services provided by the FRC. In such cases, personnel are more likely to describe the Family Resource Center in terms of separate, uniquely functioning services.

Schedule of Service Programs

Program scheduling is another opportunity or barrier to the interaction that promotes collaborative relationships and service integration. A program or service can be offered either at a time when no other programs are offered in the Family Resource Center or can be coordinated with other programs in ways that are mutually beneficial. For example, some adult education classes are held at night when no other programs are going on. On the other hand, some FRCs schedule Positive Youth Development and child care programs at the same time in the same place. Overlapping schedules provide an opportunity for multiple members of the same family to attend programs at the same time.

This strategy works best for FRCs that are scheduling multiple programs at the same site. In fact, scheduling multiple programs at one site improves participation by families because of the convenience. Most FRCs providing services in one place practiced some overlapping scheduling. Several administrators described providing Adult Education and Preschool Child Care services together, and School Age Child Care and Positive Youth Development programs at the same time.

FRC administrators said that when core services are located in close proximity, program staff members from different core services are likely to meet each other frequently and informally. Meetings can be called on the spur of the moment and regular meetings are likely to be well attended. More informal communication is likely, promoting joint decision-making and activities. In a few FRCs, one set of staff members manages and delivers all core services. Each staff member knows and is able to do the job of all the others, filling in as needed. In a few other FRCs, some personnel specialize, working in only one core service, and do not know or interact with those from other services.

An important goal of each Family Resource Center is to produce a service delivery system that is a seamless network of services that families can access easily and conveniently. The ways in which the core services are linked to each other and interact on behalf of the children and families influences a family's satisfaction with services and continued participation. The intensity and duration of a family's participation mediates the short-term and long-term goals achieved by each family member. Chapter IV describes characteristics of FRC participants, their use of Family Resource Center services, and their perceptions about the services.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Chapter IV. Participants' Use of Services

Chapter IV. Participants' Use of Services

This chapter presents findings that describe the participants using the Family Resource Centers' core services, the amount of service delivered, and perceptions of service use. The findings summarize data gathered from the Evaluation Support System (ESS), the Participant Survey, and focus group discussions with parents.

Information about participation in services was collected using the Family Resource Centers Evaluation Support System (ESS). The ESS was designed by RMC Research Corporation to provide a common system for all Family Resource Centers to collect enrollment and participation data in a similar format. Each FRC was asked to track enrollment and participation information from July 1, 1995 through June 30, 1996; the findings in this report represent different snapshots of service use during a twelve month period.

It is likely that the data summarized here underestimate the amount of services actually provided by the Family Resource Centers. Most data collection efforts about human behavior and activities underestimate the phenomena being studied. Some families do not like to fill out forms when enrolling for simple services, some participants are reluctant to give personal information such as income, and staff members are sometimes reluctant to appear as "watchdogs" when gathering information.

Characteristics of Participating Families

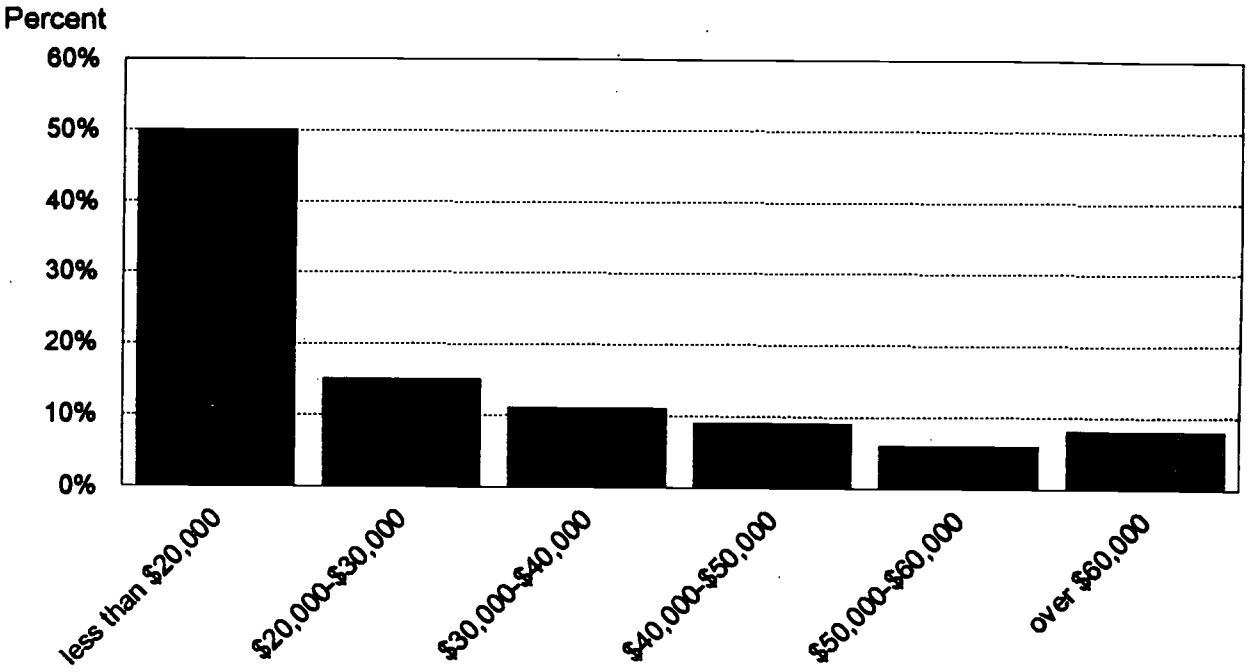
Between June 1, 1995 and June 30, 1996, the 18 Family Resource Centers reported serving 3,634 families, about 202 families per center. Family Resource Center services are provided to children and families regardless of income level. The FRC philosophy is that all families need services to strengthen family management practices and for quality child care. However, each Family Resource Center has the flexibility to design service delivery to meet its local needs.

Certain schools within a district may be targeted as having families more in need of support services, but in those schools, all children and families have equal access to FRC services regardless of income.

Income

Based on interviews with stakeholders, equal access for families regardless of income is a strength of the Family Resource Center model. The yearly household income of participating families is shown in Exhibit 15.

Exhibit 15
Yearly Household Income of Family Resource Center Participating Families
(n = 2,254 families)



Source: Evaluation Support System (ESS), 1996.

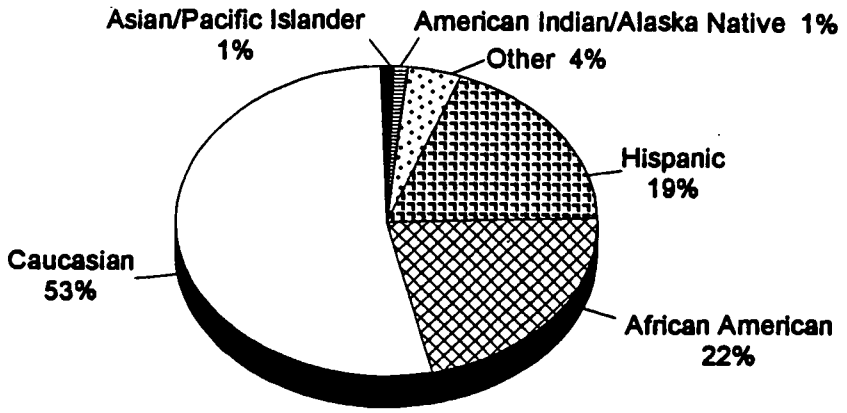
- Family Resource Center services are used by families of all income levels; however, about half (50%) have incomes less than $20,000. Nearly 15% reported incomes of $50,000 or more.

- The median yearly household income reported by Family Resource Center families is less than $20,000. The 1990 U.S. Census reported the median household income in Connecticut at $41,721. Clearly, a higher proportion of low income families are using Family Resource Center services than families with higher household income levels.

Ethnicity

Exhibit 16 shows the ethnic background of participating families.

Exhibit 16
Ethnic Background of Family Resource Center Participating Families
(n = 3,233 families)



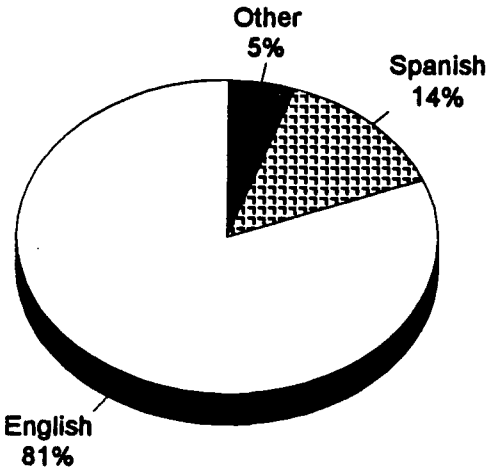
Source: Evaluation Support System (ESS), 1996.

- Fifty-three percent (53%) of Family Resource Center families identified their ethnic background as Caucasian and 22% as African American. Nineteen percent (19%) of participating families are Hispanic. The 1990 U.S. Census reported that 87% of the Connecticut population is Caucasian, 8% is African American, and 6.5% are persons of Hispanic origin.

Language

Exhibit 17 shows the primary language used in the home of FRC participating families.

Exhibit 17
Primary Language Used in the Home by Family Resource Center Participating Families
(n = 3,288 families)



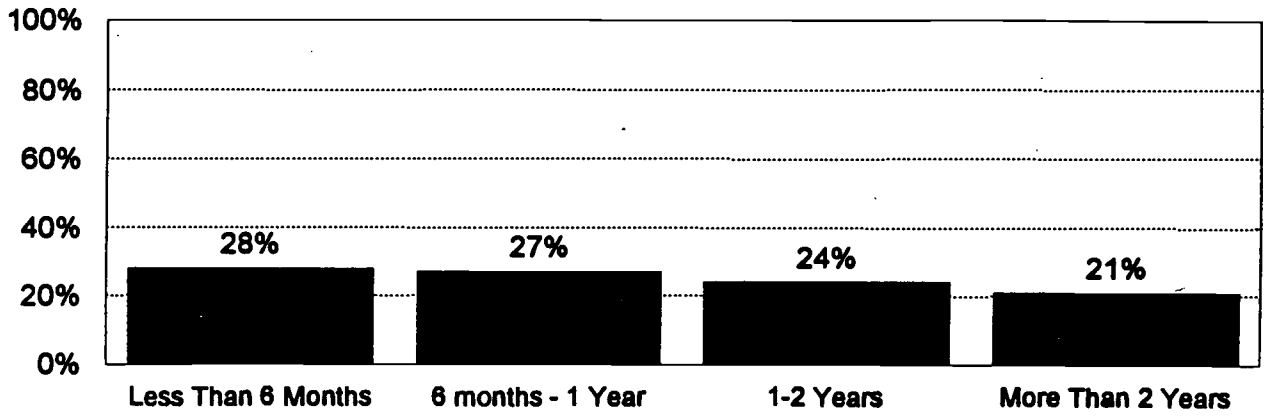
Source: Evaluation Support System (ESS), 1996.

- English was reported as the primary language for about 80% of participating families, and Spanish was the primary language for 14% of enrolled families.
- Based on findings from the Participant Survey, other languages spoken in homes of FRC participating families include Vietnamese, Chinese, Creole, and French.

Length of Participation

Respondents to the Participant Survey were asked to describe how long they had participated in Family Resource Center activities: less than six months, six months to a year, one to two years, or more than two years (see Exhibit 18).

Exhibit 18
Length of Time in Family Resource Center Activities
(n = 725 participants)



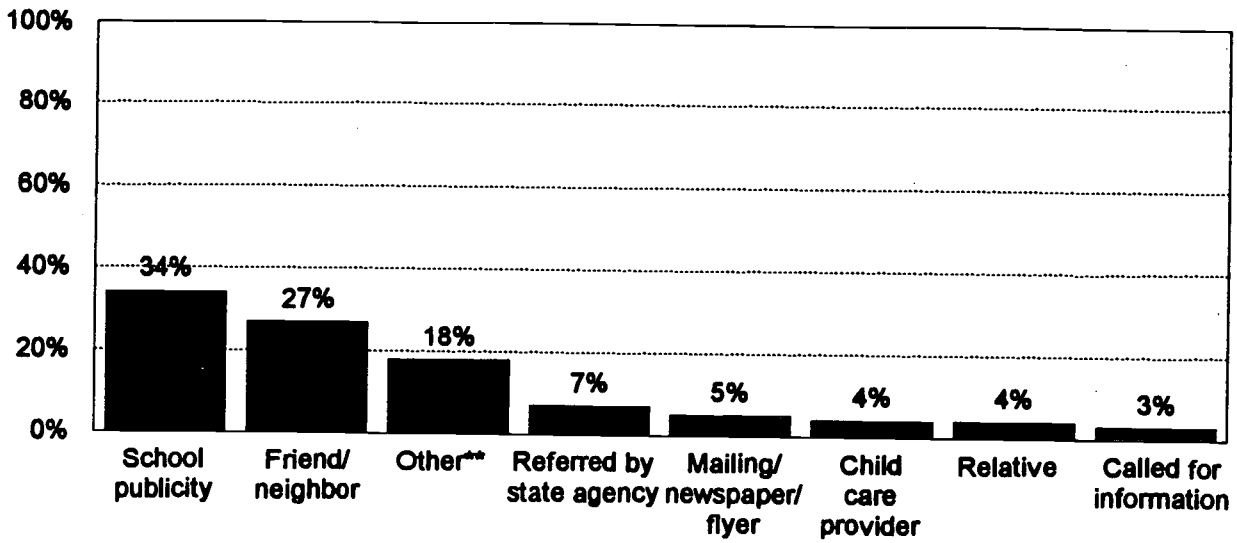
Source: Participant Survey, 1996.

- Respondents were about equally divided among families new to the FRC (one year or less) and families who had been in the program for over a year.
- Established FRCs tend to have more participants who have been in the program for longer periods of time than newer FRCs.

How Families Know About FRC Services

On the family enrollment form of the ESS, participants were asked to indicate how they learned about the Family Resource Center. Exhibit 19 shows that participants obtain information about the centers through a variety of sources.

Exhibit 19
*Sources of Referral to Family Resource Centers**
(n = 2,673 participants)



Source: Evaluation Support System (ESS), 1996.

*Respondents could indicate more than one source.
**Other refers to school staff members, Family Resource Center staff members, INFOLINE, phone book, walk in.

- Friend/neighbor and school publicity are the most common sources of referral to the Family Resource Centers.
- The "Other" category showed a wide variety of sources used by the Family Resource Center staff to increase awareness of the services provided.

Service Participation

The ESS was designed to capture information about all family members whether or not they participated in services. It was assumed that other family members would eventually participate in FRC services, or at least benefit indirectly from family involvement in Family Resource Center activities. The Family Resource Centers reported a total of 9,470 of family members enrolled; nearly 5,000 participated in one or more services, about 278 family members per center. Exhibit 20 shows the number of services used by participating family members.

Exhibit 20
Participation in Core Services
(n = 4,735 participants)

Number of Core Services	Number of Family Members Participating	Percent of Family Members Participating
1	3,514	74%
2	804	17%
3	344	7%
4 or more	73	2%
TOTAL	4,735	

Source: Evaluation Support System (ESS), 1996.

- Seventy-four percent (74%) of participating family members were enrolled in only one FRC core service, 17% were enrolled in two services, and 9% enrolled in three or more core services.

The Family Resource Centers reported on participation by currently or previously enrolled family members in five core services: Preschool Child Care, School Age Child Care, Families in Training, Adult Education, and Positive Youth Development. They also reported on participation in services provided other than the core services (described as "Other" services in the following tables). These include case management services such as finding housing and food for families, enrolling children in school, translating for families, dealing with law enforcement personnel, and arranging for health services. Family Resource Centers in urban areas were more likely to report providing other services in addition to the core services.

Exhibit 21 shows the participation in each of the five core and other services between July 1, 1995 and June 30, 1996.

Exhibit 21
Participation in Each Service
*(n = 6,054 enrolled participants)**

Services	Number Participating	Percent Enrolled
Preschool Child Care	621	10%
School Age Child Care	908	15%
Families in Training	2,205	36%
Adult Education	552	9%
Positive Youth Development	682	11%
Other	1,086	18%

Source: Evaluation Support System (ESS), 1996.
*This total is larger than the actual number of participating family members (n=4,735) because some individuals enrolled in more than one service.

- Participation in the core services is highest for Families in Training (36%) followed by the two child care programs.

In Exhibit 22, participation in each service area is broken down by the type of service delivery arrangement used by centers to provide each service.

Exhibit 22
Participation in Services by Type of Service Arrangement
*(n = 6,054 enrolled participants)**

	Service Arrangements				
Services	**Direct Administration**	**Collaboration**	**Referral with Support**	**Referral Only**	**TOTAL**
Preschool Child Care	67% (417)	8% (47)	4% (25)	21% (132)	100% (621)
School Age Child Care	52% (469)	44% (398)	3% (25)	2% (16)	100% (908)
Families In Training	99% (2,183)	1% (22)	NA	NA	100% (2,205)
Adult Education	NA	97% (535)	NA	3% (17)	100% (552)
Positive Youth Development	47% (322)	41% (281)	3% (21)	9% (58)	100% (682)
Other	NA	NA	NA	NA	100% (1,086)

Source: Evaluation Support System (ESS), 1996.
*This total is larger than the actual number of participating family members (n=4,735) because some individuals enrolled in more than one service.

- The first row of the exhibit shows that 67% of the total number of children receiving preschool child care services were enrolled in sites that directly provided child care services, 8% were enrolled in centers that provided preschool child care through collaborative arrangements, 4% received services from centers that made referrals to child care settings in the community and provided support such as financial stipends, and 21% received services from centers that provided child care through resource and referral services.

It is interesting to note that for most services, the pattern of participation roughly reflects the pattern of service delivery arrangements (see Exhibit 2, Chapter II). For example, most of the centers provide School Age Child Care either directly or arranged through collaboration approaches. Exhibit 22 shows that nearly all of school age children participating in child care or

Positive Youth Development services receive them from centers offering the services either directly or collaboratively.

The sixth core service, Resource and Referral, is provided directly by all the centers. Family Resource Center staff are encouraged to maintain logs of Resource and Referral contacts, indicating the nature of the contact, type of information provided, and the length of time engaged in the contact. Information about Resource and Referral contacts is maintained for FRC family members and non-FRC individuals (persons not enrolled in core services and probably a one time contact). During the reporting period, twelve Family Resource Centers reported 4,661 resource and referral contacts.[1] Most of the requests were questions about the time and location of FRC programs.

Extent of Services Received

Service hours were tracked by core service and special events (e.g., workshops and lectures) for both FRC family members and non-FRC individuals. Between July 1, 1995 and June 30, 1996, 17 Family Resource Centers reported a total of 600,816 hours of service. Nearly 95% of the total service hours were provided to families enrolled in the FRCs.

[1] Data were not available from six centers for two possible reasons: 1) there were computer problems with this data file or 2) the information was not collected.

Exhibit 23 below shows the average monthly hours of service provided by each center for six core services and other services offered, and the range of the average monthly hours of services provided.

Exhibit 23
Hours of Core Services Provided

Services	Average Hours Per Month By Site	Range of Hours By Site
Preschool Child Care (n=11)*	1,787	98 - 4,822
School Age Child Care		
** Before School Program (n=8)	1,060	9 - 3,341
** After School Program (n=5)	773	21 - 3,081
*** Summer Program (n=6)	1,320	70 - 3,128
Families In Training (n=12)	317	38 - 906
Adult Education (n=12)	274	9 - 1,253
Family Child Care Provider Training (n=8)	45	2 - 157
Positive Youth Development (n=12)	301	19 - 838
Other (n=10)	160	15 - 493

Source: Evaluation Support System (ESS), 1996.
*Number of centers.
**Calculations based on 9 months.
***Calculations based on 2.5 months.

- Between January 1, 1994 and September 1, 1996, each Family Resource Center provided an average of 1,787 hours per month of Preschool Child Care Services. The monthly average hours of Preschool Child Care service ranged from 98 hours at one center to 4,822 hours at another center.

- The amount of participation hours was smallest for Family Child Care Provider Training; this service tends to be offered infrequently and sessions are not continuous. The other core services were more likely to be ongoing services over a period of time.

To gain a better sense of what the number of service hours provided means for an individual, monthly average number of participation hours were calculated. Exhibit 24 shows the average

number of service hours provided monthly per site, the average monthly enrollment, and the average number of hours a Family Resource Center participant is enrolled in each service.[2]

Exhibit 24
Number of Hours Participating in Family Resource Center Services

Services	Average Monthly Hours of Service per Site	Average Monthly Enrollment per Site	Average Monthly Hours per Participant
Preschool Child Care (n=10)*	1,941	55	35
School Age Child Care			
Before School Program (n=8)	1,060	44	24
After School Program (n=8)	773	95	8
Families in Training (n=12)	317	163	2
Adult Education (n=11)	293	32	9
Positive Youth Development (n=10)	272	48	6
Other (n=7)	195	88	2

Source: Evaluation Support System (ESS), 1996.
*Number of centers.

- On average, families enrolled in FRC Preschool Child Care services receive 35 hours of care per month — about eight to nine hours weekly or two hours daily.
- FRC school age children, on average, participate 1.5 hours each day in a before school program. A typical parent and a school age child receives FRC services between 10 and 11 hours per week in adult education classes, before school programs, and after school activities (including Positive Youth Development).
- On average, adults spend a little more than one hour per week attending adult education classes and two hours per month attending Families in Training programs.
- Based on the values in Exhibit 25, a typical parent and a preschooler receives approximately 10 hours per week of FRC services (Adult Education and Preschool Child Care).

[2] The sample size in Exhibit 24 differs from the sample sizes used for Exhibit 23 because both service hours and enrollment data were not available from all centers. Also, enrollment data for School Age Child Care summer programs and Family Child Care Provider Training were not collected.

Perceptions of Utilization

Another way of understanding the amount of services received is to ask consumers how frequently the services were used: regularly, occasionally, or never. The Participant Survey asked adults whose families were enrolled in the Family Resource Centers to report on their participation in the centers. This survey solicited voluntary responses from participants in the centers during a brief period of time, approximately one month, and was not designed, unlike the Evaluation Support System, to get an estimated count of participation hours. Instead, this approach is less objective, relying on each person's determination of how often they participated. The result is a summary of the perceptions of a sample of 750 adults with families participating in center activities.

In the Participant Survey, adults whose families participated in a program, activity, or event of the Family Resource Centers were asked how often they used the core services during the previous year. The following exhibit describes their participation *within* each service. Because of bias in the data collection process, this exhibit is not appropriate for comparison of participation *across* services.

Exhibit 25
*Self-Reported Participation in Family Resource Center Core Services**

Core Services	Regularly	Occasionally	Never
Preschool Child Care (n=571)**	33%	5%	62%
School Age Child Care (n=555)	28%	6%	66%
Families in Training (n=581)	45%	14%	42%
Adult Education (n=581)	31%	8%	61%
Family Child Care Provider Training (n=516)	6%	5%	89%
Positive Youth Development (n=534)	14%	19%	67%
Resource and Referral (n=574)	20%	26%	55%

Source: Participant Survey, 1996.
*Percents may not total 100% due to rounding.
**Number of Participant Survey respondents. Because each service was a separate item in the survey, number of responses varied across services.

This table gives some indication of the intensity of services provided at the centers as perceived by the users of those services. Families In Training, Preschool Child Care, Adult Education, and School Age Child Care are the services most regularly attended. These are services that are ongoing throughout the year and participation is expected to be regular. Positive Youth Development and Resource and Referral services are more likely to be used on an occasional basis, probably because youth programs are often special events or short-term and irregularly scheduled, and resource information is a service that people tend to use only when they need it.

In addition to the programs they are already using, Participant Survey respondents also noted a number of programs they would like to see offered at their centers.

- The largest number of requests was for additional adult education focused on job skills and training. Computer training made up almost half of these requests. Nursing, cosmetology, and driving lessons were also suggested by a number of participants. Some wanted extended hours or additional GED classes. There also were a number of requests for recreational classes for adults: sewing, cooking, adult swimming, dancing, and acting.
- Child care programs were the second most requested area of programming. Participants wanted more programs for all ages, programs in the summer and over the holidays, and drop-in child care. Apparently, the resources available through the Family Resource Centers and their collaborating partners are not enough to meet the local demand for these types of services.
- The third request was for additional parenting programs. Requests ranged from home visitation programs to support groups for parents to more parenting education workshops and classes. Play groups were most often requested: more play groups, with additional age groups, or play groups meeting more often or serving special populations (e.g., non-English families).

Reasons for Participation

Parents in focus groups at two Family Resource Center sites gave a number of reasons why they like to participate in the programs and activities. They repeatedly said the centers are relaxing places where they feel welcome. The parents feel safe at the centers and do not have to worry about leaving their children. They credit the staff of the centers for this environment. FRC staff members are described as warm and friendly, caring, open, and outgoing to parents and children, people they could trust. Parents report that staff members are always willing to help, whatever the issue. This support is a source of considerable security for these parents. Below is a sample of comments from parents in the focus groups.

"Everyone here is calmer."

"I feel like I belong, finally. The center is an extension of home."

"They don't feel sorry for you or look down on you."

"They are there when you need them."

Positive experiences and seeing tangible results with various programs offered by the Family Resource Centers keep bringing the parents and their children back for more participation. They start in one program and are satisfied with it and are encouraged to become involved with other programs or activities. The parents' priorities are recreational and academic opportunities for their children provided by the Family Resource Centers that they could not experience otherwise. They reported that their children are excited and enthusiastic about these experiences, and are improving socially and academically. Most parents report that they as well as their children learn.

"Going into kindergarten was much easier for my daughter — she was really psyched about goals."

"They [children] think of school in a positive way."

"I've seen a big change, being involved in my children's education."

"It's changed the way I talk to my kids."

Barriers to Participation

In the Participant Survey, more than a quarter (27%) of the respondents said there were FRC programs they would like to participate in but were unable to do so. Out of the 116 people who identified specific programs they would like to participate in, but were unable to attend, half noted Families In Training programs. These include play groups, parenting classes, and workshops.

There are many reasons why people are unable to participate in FRC programs; Exhibit 26 shows the reasons given by the survey respondents.

Exhibit 26
Reasons Given for Lack of Participation in Family Resource Center Programs
(n = 750 participants)

Reason	Percent of Responses
Program time or schedule	26%
Lack of transportation	9%
Program has no openings	2%
Program cost	2%
We do not feel welcome	2%

Source: Participant Survey, 1996.

Eighty-six respondents volunteered more specific information about why they are not participating. Their reasons divided among four circumstances: conflicts with working schedules, young or special needs children at home, lack of child care or baby sitting, and lack of information about center programs.

Ten percent of the survey participants said they were not participating in FRC activities (although other family members like children might be). Compared to adults who said they still participate in FRC activities, non-participating adults are significantly more likely ($p<.01$)[3] to have children enrolled in Preschool Child Care. Those parents cited their own work schedules and lack of time or the center's schedules as reasons they cannot participate. As working parents, they said the FRC provides a critical service that allows them to hold a job, but that their own families' stage of development precludes taking advantage of adult-oriented FRC programs.

Hispanic respondents who had the opportunity to use a Spanish translation of the survey, were significantly ($p<.01$) more likely than other ethnic groups to be part of this non-participating adult group. Of the 102 Hispanics responding to the question, almost 20% said they were not participating. A small number of comments (four) from non-participants suggest that language, rather than schedules or time, may be a barrier to participation for at least some of these adults.

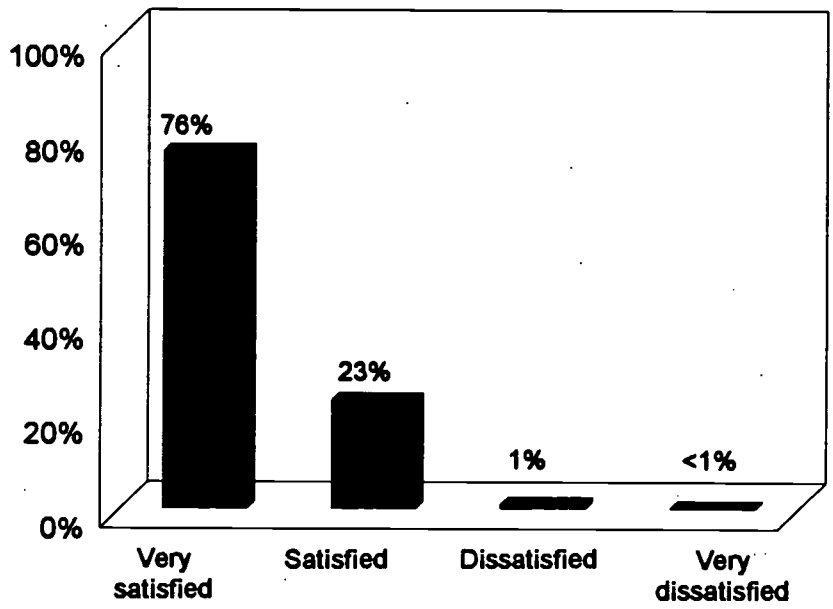
[3] $p<.01$ means that the probability is less than 1% that this finding would have happened by chance alone.

Satisfaction of Participants

Ratings of satisfaction are one indicator of how well Family Resource Center programs are meeting the needs of families. Although each site may have its own particular emphasis, these ratings give a picture of the quality of service delivery across all sites from the perspective of the consumers of those services.

Adults participating in Family Resource Center programs were asked to rate their satisfaction with specific aspects of service delivery and with the Family Resource Center overall. The adult respondents expressed very high satisfaction with their Family Resource Center. (See Exhibit 27.)

Exhibit 27
Overall Rating of Participant Satisfaction with Family Resource Center
(n = 676 participants)



Source: Participant Survey, 1996.

More than 96% were either satisfied or very satisfied with convenience of location, hours of services, types of programs offered, quality of programs, and staffing. These ratings did not differ significantly by ethnic group, primary language used in the home, family income, respondent's length of participation in FRC programs, or the type of program component.

Respondents who said they were not participating in FRC programs were significantly ($p<.01$) more likely to report dissatisfaction with FRC hours of services. Almost twenty percent (12 respondents) of this group responded that they were dissatisfied with their center's hours. However, overall this group was as satisfied with other aspects of the FRCs as those actively participating.

This chapter presented findings that described the characteristics of participants using FRC services, the extent of services delivered, and perceptions of service use by participants. Chapter V presents the findings on perceived effects of the FRCs on families and schools from interviews, surveys, and focus group discussions with parents, school staff members, and stakeholders.

Chapter V. Impacts on Families and Schools

Chapter V. Impacts on Families and Schools

Impact of Family Resource Centers on Families

The long-term goal of the Connecticut Family Resource Centers is to prevent an array of childhood and adolescent problems by strengthening effective family management practices and establishing a continuum of school-based/linked child care and family support services at each site. These strategies, over time, perhaps ten years or more, are expected to change the behavior of families and children in ways that will improve their quality of life and success in the community.

One means of tracking progress toward this goal is to measure the accomplishment of smaller steps along the way, i.e., short-term effects. Evidence of progress of using the two strategies listed above can be found by asking families participating in Family Resource Centers to report on behaviors and conditions suggested by research to be associated with these longer-term goals. As mentioned in the Chapter I, some of these behaviors and conditions include adults' improved academic skills, parenting knowledge and skills, expanded social support networks, positive attitudes towards schools, growth in children's academic or social skills and achievements, and positive changes in neighborhoods.

The Family Resource Center Participant Survey was designed to measure the short-term effects of the FRCs on families. As part of the survey, respondents at Family Resource Centers chose among a series of statements to describe what the Family Resource Center means to them. In the survey, each dimension of individual, family, and community-level short-term effects that could be observed by the respondent and are attributed to participation in a Family Resource Center are described by two or three statements. In this section of Chapter V, the overall findings for these statements are presented first, followed by a series of findings looking at the respondents' perceptions of impact by the length of time they have participated in FRC activities and by their language, ethnicity, and income. Findings are based on responses from a sample of 750 adults, representing all eighteen FRCs.

Overall Perceptions of Impact

Exhibit 28, on the following page, shows the entire checklist of statements from which respondents could choose items to describe their experiences; the statements are listed in the order of most to least frequently checked statement.

Exhibit 28
Meaning of the Family Resource Center to Participants
(n = 750 participants)

Statement	Percent
My child has something interesting and fun to do.	72%
My child is learning new skills or is taking part in new activities.	69%
My child has made new friends.	69%
I have somewhere to turn if I need help.	60%
I have become friends with other parents.	59%
I feel there is someone who cares about my family.	53%
I have learned new skills.	50%
I have learned what to expect of children at different ages.	49%
My child is in a safe place when I cannot be with him/her.	45%
I have gained more education.	42%
I am more comfortable in my child's school.	41%
I have learned new ways to discipline my child.	41%
I worry less about my child because I know he/she is getting quality child care.	40%
I miss less work or school because child care is available.	32%
My child had a better transition to kindergarten.	26%
Relationships in my family are better.	25%
My child is doing better in school.	24%
My neighborhood feels closer together.	10%
My neighborhood is improving.	8%
Other*	7%
I have received training and home child care licensing information.	7%

Source: Participant Survey, 1996.
*Other comments were variants of the statements above or were examples of those statements. A few commented on specific staff members by name.

- More than two-thirds of the respondents said that using the Family Resource Center had affected their children positively, giving them enjoyable activities to participate in, increasing their skills, and expanding their network of friends.
- More than half of the respondents said that their own social support had increased.
- Increased parenting and other skills were reported by approximately half of the adults responding.
- Fewer than ten percent perceived any changes in their neighborhoods.

From the entire checklist of 21 items, respondents were asked to choose one outcome that has been the most important to them. Because of the large number of individual statements from which they could choose, their answers could have been spread among several different categories of outcome statements including parents' growth in academic or parenting skills, their social network or attitudes toward school, children's social or academic growth, or changes in their neighborhoods. Instead, parents' responses clustered in one area. More than ten percent selected the following statements:

My child is learning new skills or is taking part in new activities (15%);
My child is in a safe place when I cannot be with him/her (13%); and
I worry less about my child because I know he/she is getting quality child care (12%).

For 40% of this sample of FRC participants, the FRCs are of most value for the opportunities for learning and quality care received by their children, and the security that parents feel as a result.

An apparent contradiction is that the second and third statements above are not among the most frequently chosen outcome statements in Exhibit 28. That parents chose them as the most important statement out of the list is likely due to the similar concepts expressed in the two statements; FRCs relieve parents' anxiety about being apart from their children. Had the survey presented one, rather than two statements about parental anxiety to choose from, the number of parents checking that statement would probably put that single statement at the top of the list in Exhibit 28.

Data from focus groups held at two Family Resource Centers support the priority that parents place on the care and education received by their children. Parents in these groups said they were pleased that their children were in a safe place with people they trusted to care and teach them. They felt that the FRCs offered their children opportunities for activities, programs,

and trips that they would not ordinarily be able to provide for their children. In addition, parenting skills were mentioned frequently by these parents. The parents recognized that their exposure to and participation in FRC programs was helping their children because it was changing the way parents interacted with their children.

"I don't yell at my children no more."

"My boy got a 100 on a test and I complimented him on it."

"It's changed the way I talk to my kids."

"The FRC organized me to put my own homework aside and focus on my son's, then organize my time so we both get our homework done."

"They give you evaluations on your child: set up individual goals, help you work on them, let you know how the children are meeting them. It's on paper, every six months, goals for them and goals for myself."

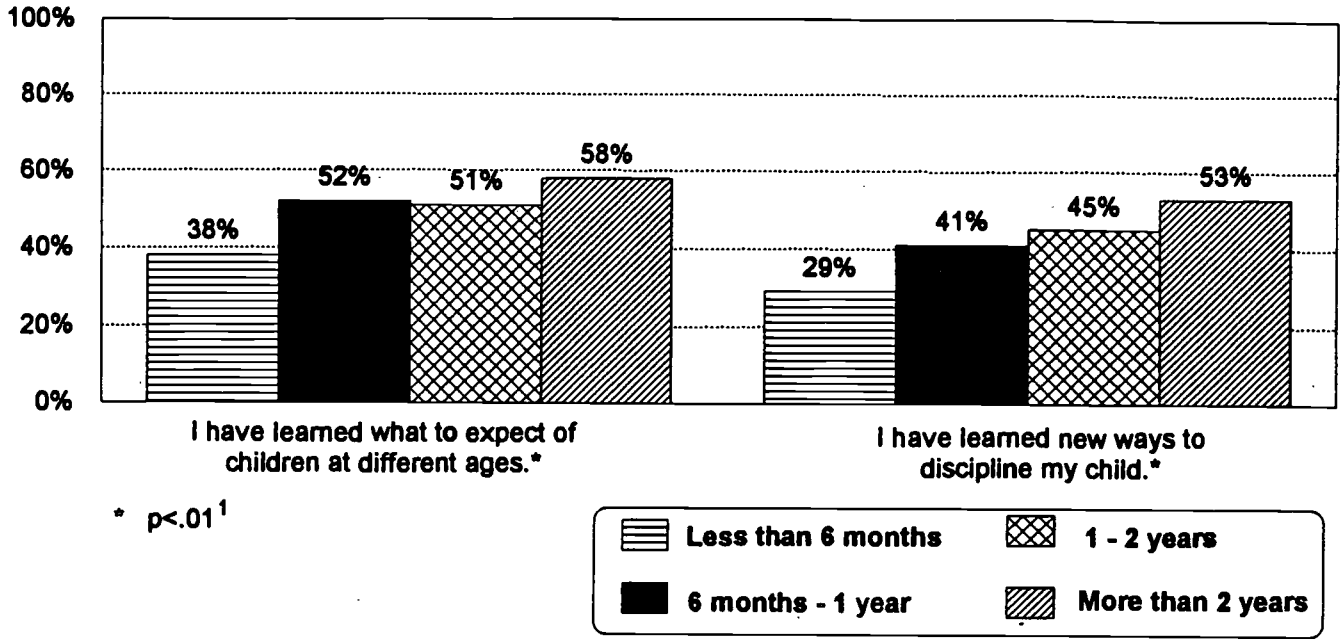
Based on these findings from the Participant Survey, the primary impacts that parents recognize are the growth and safety of their children, and enhanced relationships between parents and children.

Perceptions of Impact by Length of Participation

Families who participate in the Family Resource Centers typically enroll initially for a single service, e.g., child care, a class, a play group, or a workshop. Once enrolled, however, families may continue their involvement with the Family Resource Center as long as there are activities or services that meet their needs or interests. Families are encouraged to do this under the assumption that the longer the family's involvement, the more likely the Family Resource Center will have a positive impact on that family. There is indirect evidence from the Participant Survey that this is the case.

The following series of exhibits (29-36) shows the relationships between the length of time survey respondents participated in the Family Resource Center and their perceptions of short-term effects of their involvement. The items in these exhibits are grouped by category of outcome and skills: parents' attitudes towards school, their social support, and perceptions of their own growth and of their children's growth. Findings are summarized after each exhibit. Except where noted, all of these findings are statistically significant in terms of length of participation.

Exhibit 29
Meaning of Family Resource Center Participation by Length of Time in Family Resource Center Activities: Parents' Knowledge of and Behavior Toward Children (n = 725 participants)

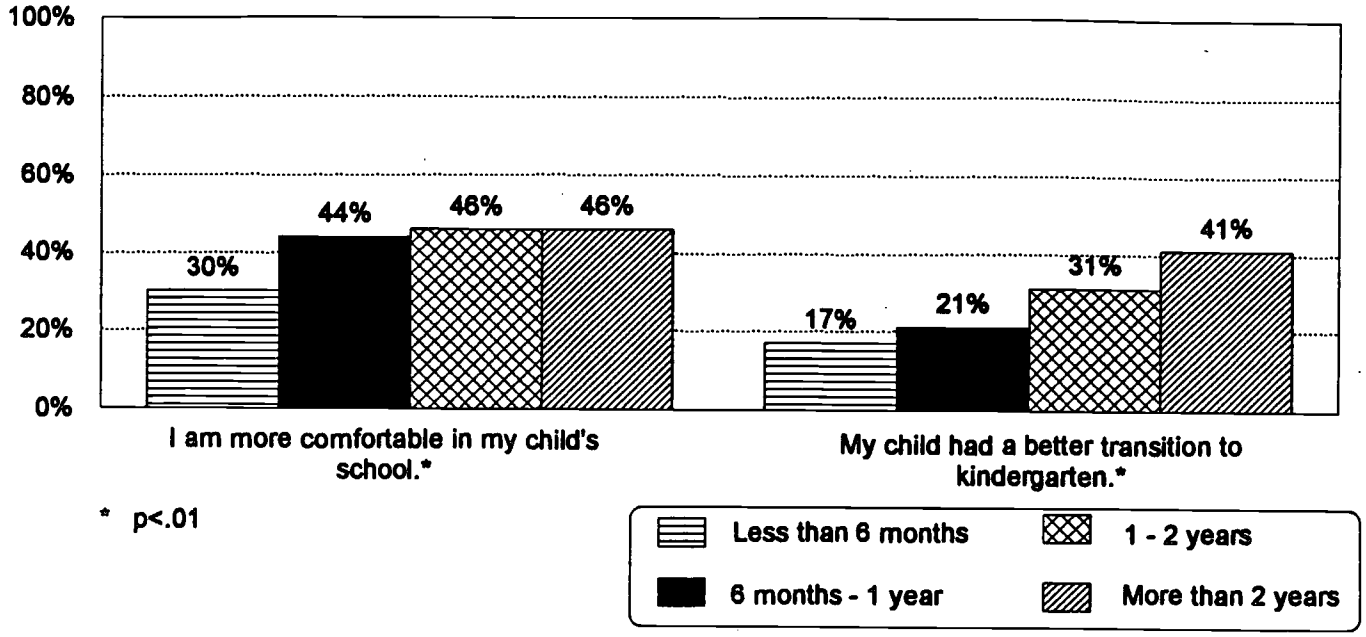


Source: Participant Survey, 1996.

- The longer respondents participated in Family Resource Center programs, the more likely they were to say that they had gained important knowledge of children and had changed their own behavior toward their children.

[1] p<.01 means that the probability is less than 1% that this finding would have happened by chance alone.

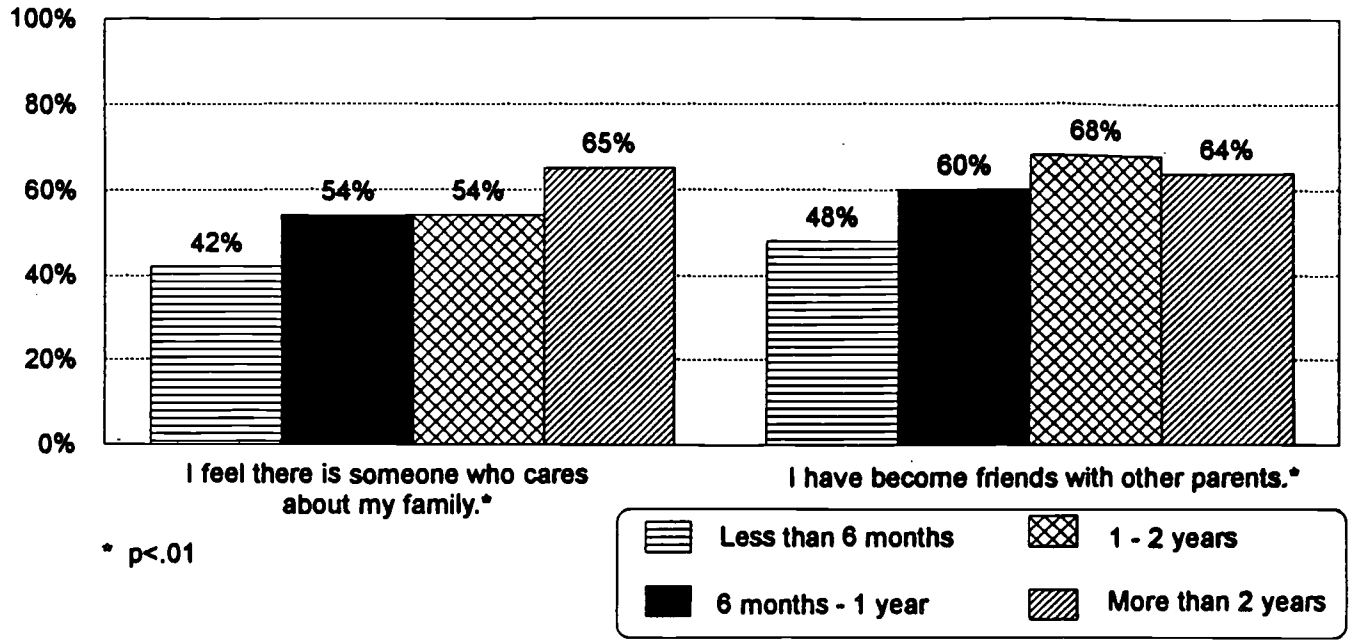
Exhibit 30
Meaning of Family Resource Center Participation by Length of Time in Family Resource Center Activities: Parents' Attitudes Toward School and School Experience
(n = 725 participants)



Source: Participant Survey, 1996.

- Parents who had participated in Family Resource Centers for longer periods of time were more likely to have positive attitudes about their child's school and the child's experience transitioning into school.

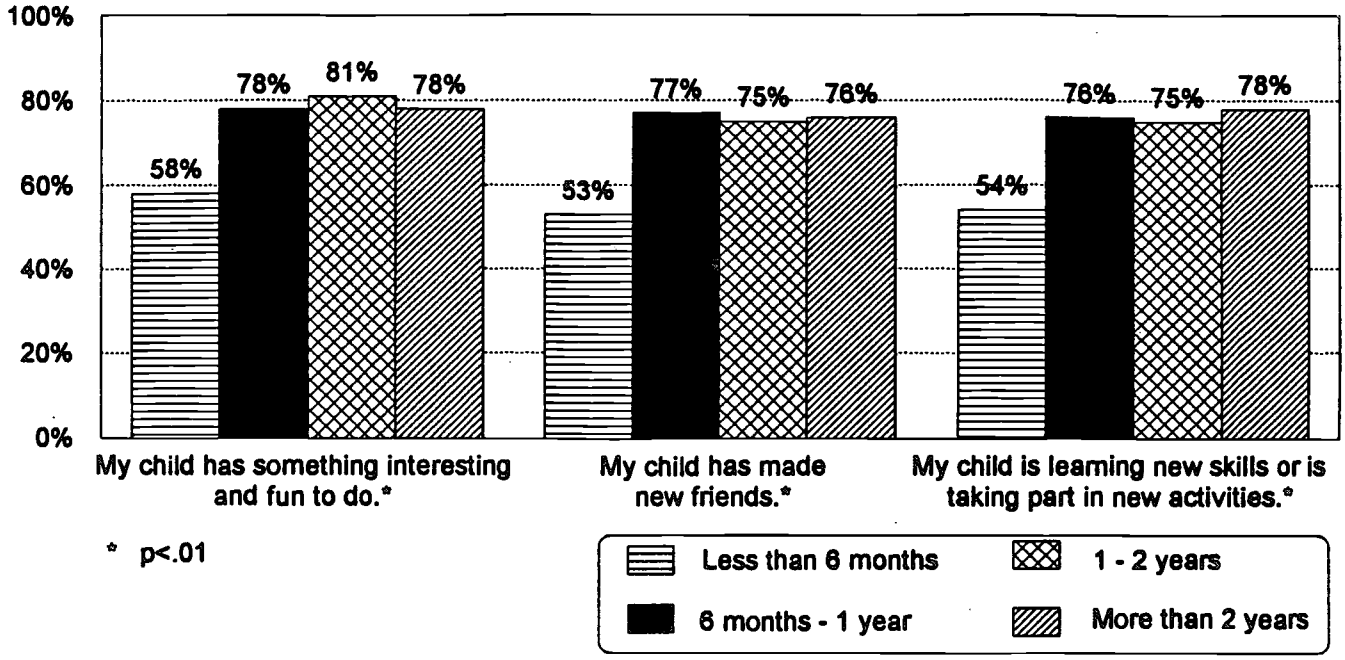
Exhibit 31
Meaning of Family Resource Center Participation by Length of Time in Family Resource Center Activities: Parents' Perceptions of Social Support
(n = 725 participants)



Source: Participant Survey, 1996.

- Over time respondents were more likely to express a sense of increased support for themselves and their families through an expanded social network and sense that the Family Resource Center is helping them.

Exhibit 32
Meaning of Family Resource Center Participation by Length of Time in Family Resource Center Activities: Parents' Perceptions of Children's Growth (n = 725 participants)



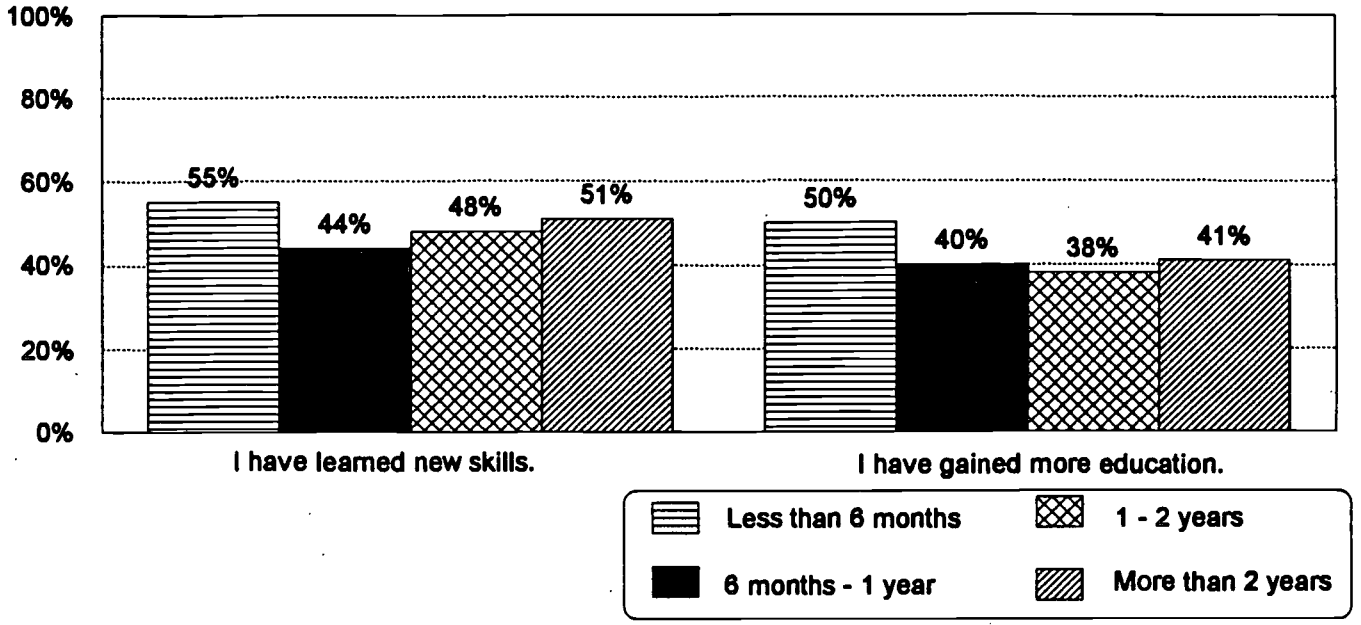
Source: Participant Survey, 1996.

- More parents observed positive growth in their children over time. They were more likely to notice expansion of their children's social network. In their children's activities and learning environment, parents were more likely to report that their children were participating and learning more.

The responses to the Participant Survey suggest that long-term participation in the Family Resource Center is an important positive influence on parents in the areas of parent-child relationships, parent-school relationships, and on children's growth and learning. Parents also perceive the Family Resource Center as facilitating their family's social support, providing opportunities to increase both their own and their children's friendship networks, and a sense that there are people in the community they can turn to for help.

A closer look at those respondents to the survey who said they had participated in the Family Resource Centers for a short time provides some insight into the differences between the new group and those who participated longer. Although not statistically significant, this new group selected statements that concerned self-development more often than other respondents.

Exhibit 33
Meaning of Family Resource Center Participation by Length of Time in Family Resource Center Activities: Parents' Perceptions of Their Own Growth (n = 725 participants)



Source: Participant Survey, 1996.

The focus on the parents' own growth is a likely result of the fact that many of those who had participated in the Family Resource Center for the least amount of time were enrolled in adult education, which involves cognitive activities that provide quick feedback on learning and growth. Some parents may not have enrolled their children in activities or it might have been too early for them to observe any impact of participation on their children.

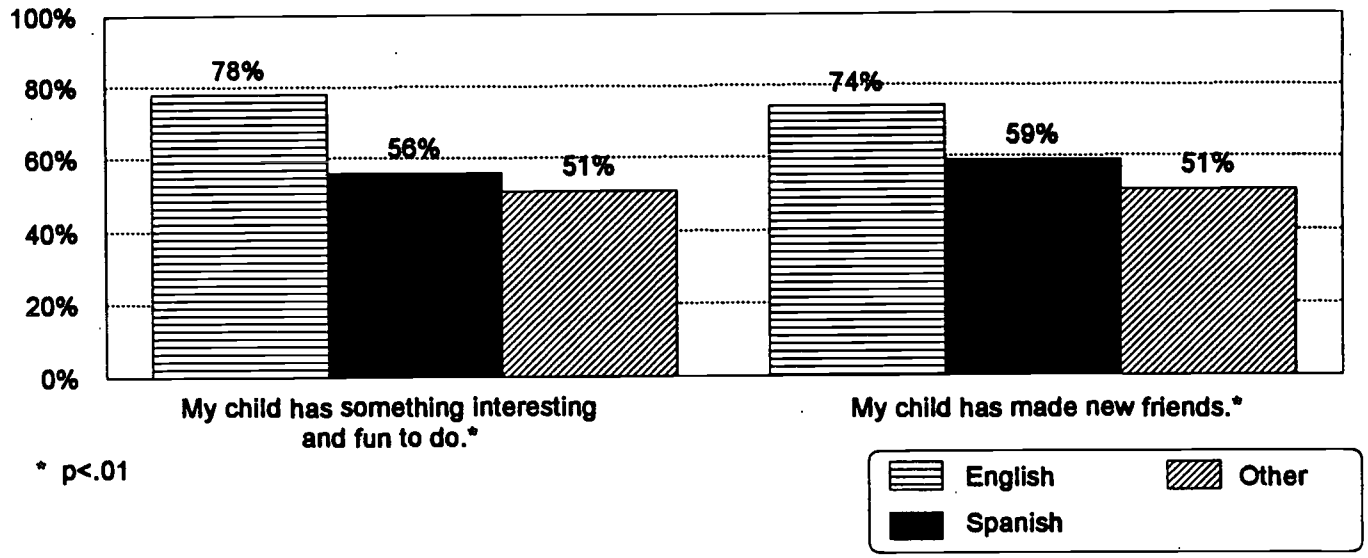
Perception of Impact by Language, Ethnicity, and Income

The Family Resource Centers are open to families of all socioeconomic, racial, and ethnic groups. However, the location of centers often means that the FRCs provide services that cater to the needs of particular groups. Participants of some groups may participate primarily in adult education classes while other groups use more child care services. One group may have a different perception of what the Family Resource Center means to their families than another

group. To investigate this possibility, the statements about what services are meaningful for families were compared across different language, ethnicity, and income groups.

There were several statistically significant differences between respondents who spoke English, Spanish, or some other language as their primary language at home. These were differences in the amount of growth parents observed in their children and in themselves. Exhibits 34-35 describe these findings.

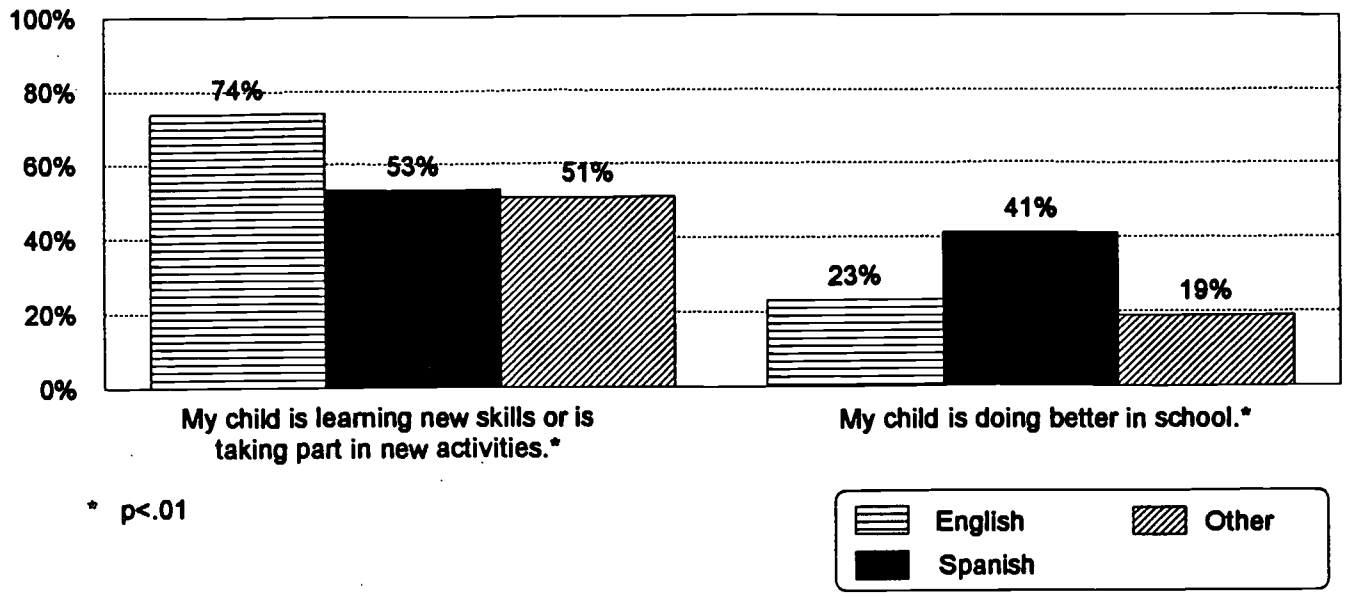
Exhibit 34
Meaning of Family Resource Center Participation by Primary Language: Perceptions of Children's Growth
(n = 704 participants)



* p<.01

Source: Participant Survey, 1996.

Exhibit 34
Meaning of Family Resource Center Participation by Primary Language: Perceptions of Children's Growth (continued)
(n = 704 participants)

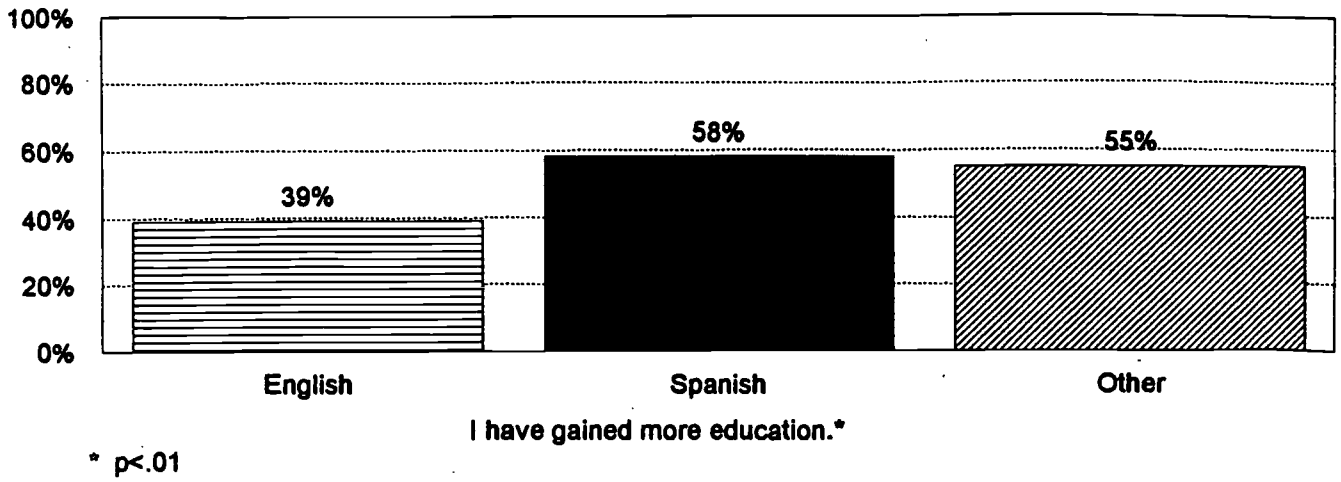


Source: Participant Survey, 1996.

- Parents who are primarily English-speaking were more likely to report positive changes in their children's social and learning environment that could lead to their children's growth. Spanish speakers, on the other hand, were most likely to report on changes specifically associated with performance in school.

That Spanish-speaking parents are more likely to attribute their children's better performance in school to the FRC suggests that the centers are having some success affecting a population that because of language and cultural barriers is often challenging to reach.

Exhibit 35
Meaning of Family Resource Center Participation by Primary Language: Perceptions of Personal Growth (n = 704 participants)



Source: Participant Survey, 1996.

- Non-English speaking respondents were more likely than English speaking participants to report their own personal growth and learning.

The higher numbers of non-English speaking participants involved in adult education programs may help explain this finding. For families needing language and job skills training, the FRC may be more important for the services they provide to adults than for services, like child care, which are more likely to be accessed by working parents.

There were few differences between the ethnic groups in the statements they chose to describe the meaning of the Family Resource Center. Within each group, respondents echoed the findings for the sample overall: improvements observed in their child's social and academic learning, and in their own social support, with only a few respondents noting changes in their neighborhoods or participation in child care training. The following are the significant differences found in the survey.

- American Indian/Alaska Natives were more likely to report that relationships in their families are better.

- Asians/Pacific Islanders were more likely to say they had learned new skills and had gained more education.
- European (not Hispanic)[2] respondents were the least likely to say that they had learned new skills or gained more education, or that the relationships in their families were better.

The high percentage of Asians/Pacific Islanders in Adult Education classes probably accounts for their reports of their own learning and skill-building. However, it is unclear from the data available in the evaluation, why American Indians/Alaska Natives reported improved relationships in their families.

Respondents with European (not Hispanic) ethnicity were more likely than the other groups to respond to items on the list concerning achievements of their children. This suggests that families of this background have less need or interest in the adult-oriented services of Family Resource Centers.

Analyses of perceived impact by family income (statistically significant, $p<.01$) show very different perspectives of the Family Resource Centers. The lower the respondents' income, the more likely they were to say:

"I worry less about my child because I know he/she is getting quality child care."

"I am more comfortable in my child's school."

"I have gained more education."

"Relationships in my family are better."

"My child is in a safe place when I cannot be with him/her."

"My child is doing better in school."

These responses reflect the anxiety, concerns for safety, and need for basic skills facing people struggling to cope with the stresses of survival under difficult circumstances. On the other hand, the higher the income of a family, the more likely the respondents were to say,

"I have become friends with other parents."

"My child has something interesting and fun to do."

---

[2] In the Participant Survey, respondents were asked to describe themselves in terms of ethnic rather than racial categories. As a consequence, the Participant Survey, using the term "European (not Hispanic)" describes a different category of people than the Evaluation Support System which used the term "Caucasian." The two groups overlap but are different. In the Participant Survey, 75% described themselves as European (not Hispanic) but in the ESS only 53% said they were Caucasian.

"My child is learning new skills or is taking part in new activities."

"My child is making new friends."

The less that income is an issue in a family, the more likely a family is to seek out activities that fulfill more than basic needs and give pleasure, and promote interpersonal relationships and self-development.

Impacts of Family Resource Center Services on Schools

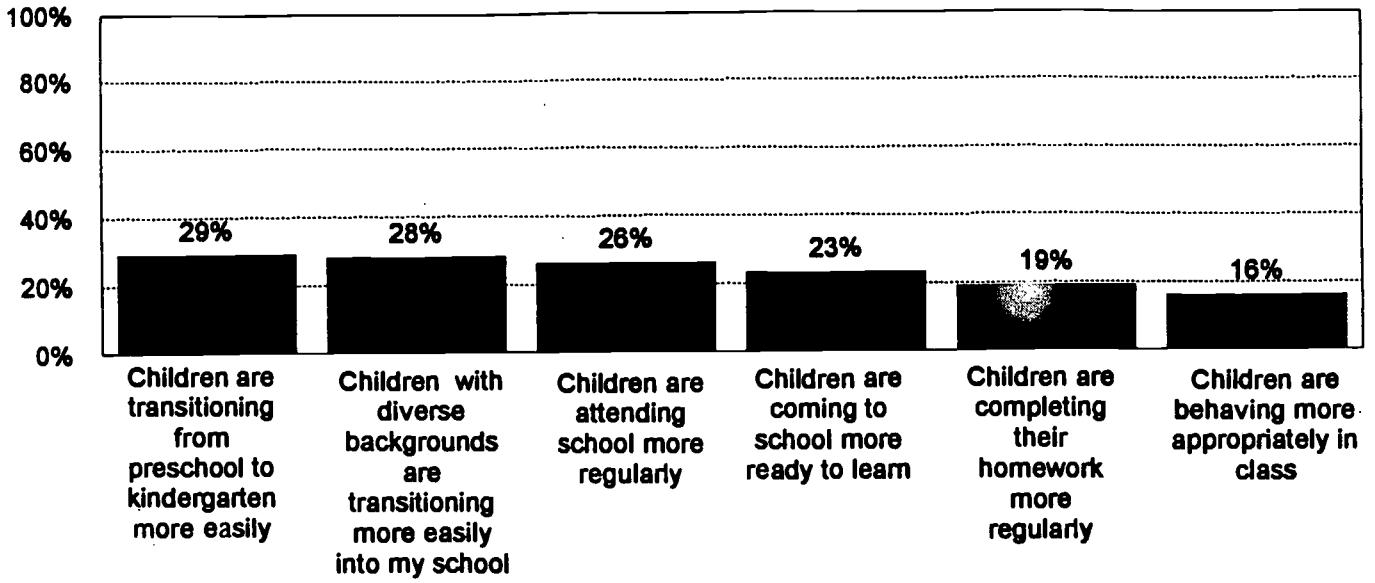
As explained in Chapter I, one way to track progress toward the long-term outcomes of the Family Resource Center service delivery model is to measure short-term effects or the accomplishments of smaller effects along the way. One set of short-term effects pertains to changes in the school environment to promote long-term outcomes such as student achievement, school graduation, and reduction in teen pregnancy.

For this evaluation, information about the perceived effects of the Family Resource Centers on schools was obtained from school staff (e.g., teachers, aides, counselors). Using the School Staff Survey, a sample (n=295) of school staff members across the 18 FRCs chose among a series of statements to describe changes they have noticed as a result of the Family Resource Centers. Specifically, respondents were asked about 1) children's behaviors in schools, 2) parent involvement in the schools, and 3) changes within the school itself such as curriculum changes and increased responsiveness to students' needs. Focus group discussions were also used to obtain information from school principals and school staff members about these effects and changes they have noticed as a result of participation in FRC programs and/or the presence of a center in their school.

Children's Behavior in Schools

Exhibit 36 shows school staff perceptions of the effects of the FRCs for children in school.

Exhibit 36
School Staff Perceptions of the Effects of the Family Resource Centers on Children
(n = 295 school staff members)



Source: School Staff Survey, 1996.

- Over one-quarter of the respondents indicated that the FRC had a positive influence on school attendance and that children are attending school more regularly (26%). Over one-fifth believe that children are coming to school more prepared and eager to learn.

- Almost 30% of school staff respondents reported that the FRC is helping children make the transition to school more easily. For children entering kindergarten, involvement in FRC programs prior to their kindergarten year may help them feel safer and at ease in the school building and with teachers as they start attending school. Also, FRC programs may provide another avenue for school age students to meet other students and gain familiarity with the school and staff members. Many FRC activities are aimed at helping students gain social and academic skills. It is assumed that when children feel comfortable in their school they will become more involved in school activities, both socially and academically.

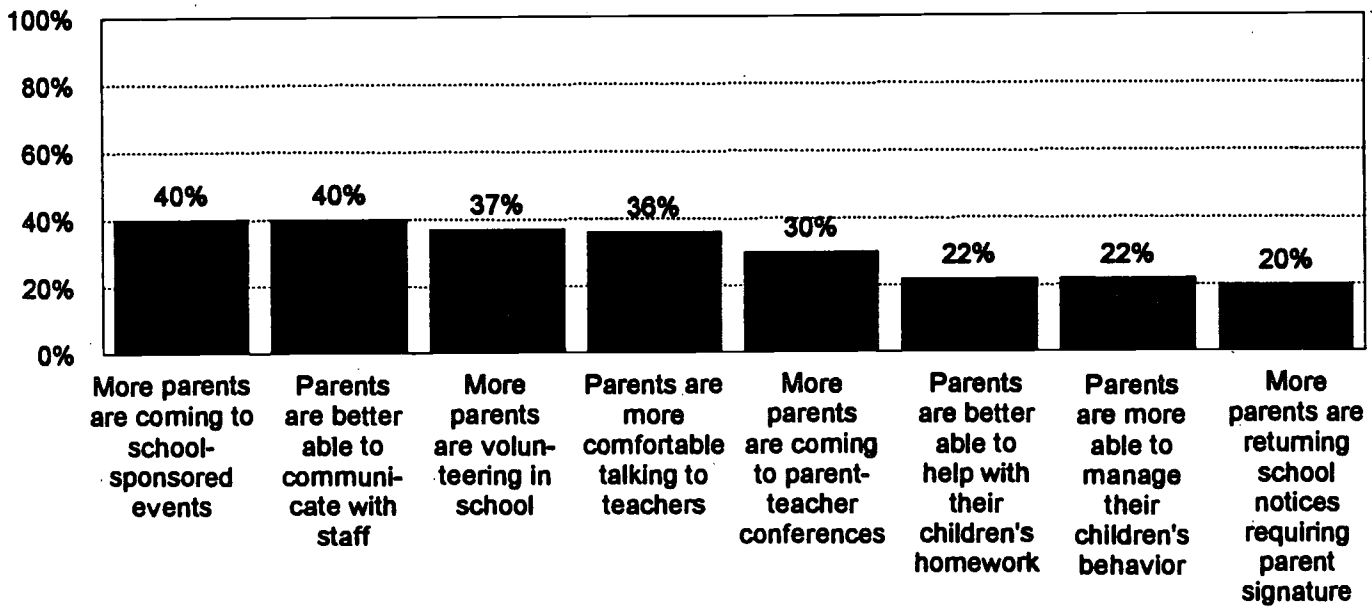
- In a focus group discussion with teachers, several commented on the positive changes they were seeing with homework completion by students. The teachers credited the Family Resource Center with influencing this change by sponsoring school activities such as homework clubs, tutoring opportunities, and computer groups.

- Eight of 12 school principals indicated they have seen an improvement in school attendance as a result of the FRC. In addition, a few principals mentioned the effects of the FRC on decreasing suspensions and detentions within their school. One principal noted that as a result of a FRC program for in-school suspension, suspensions have dropped significantly.

Parent Involvement

School staff reported that the greatest effects of the FRCs are on the behavior of families in school. This is an important result to track over time because parental involvement has been found to be a critical factor in improvement of school achievement. It is interesting to note the difference between school staff members' and parents' perceptions (parents report changes in children's behaviors as the most important effects of the FRC). Exhibit 37 shows school staff perceptions of the effects of the FRCs on parent involvement in the schools.

Exhibit 37
School Staff Perceptions of the Effects of the Family Resource Centers on Parents
(n = 295 school staff members)



Source: School Staff Survey, 1996.

- Forty percent (40%) of school staff members said that the FRC has influenced the number of parents attending school-sponsored events and over one-third reported an increase in the number of parents volunteering in the school.

- Improved ability to communicate with staff was reported by 40% of the respondents and 30% noticed that parents are more comfortable approaching and talking with teachers.

"The FRC is bringing parents into the educational aspect of their children's lives."

- Twenty percent (20%) said that school notices that require parent signatures are now being returned more frequently.

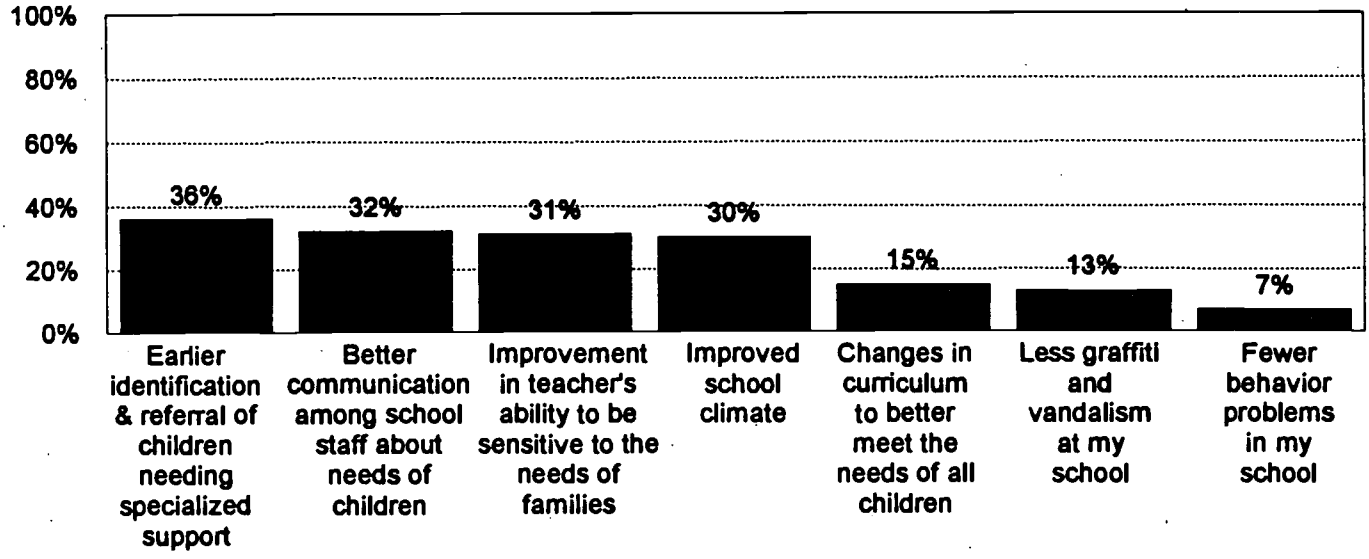
- Eight of 12 principals indicated that they have seen an increase in participation of parents within the school.

  "We see more parents coming to the PTO, especially bilingual parents because the FRC bilingual person goes too."

School Climate

Another intended effect of the FRC model is to influence change within the school environment, such as communication among school staff members about children's needs, improved sensitivity to family issues, and curriculum changes to respond to the diverse needs of families. It is assumed that change within the school structure due to the centers' presence will increase with time. Exhibit 38 shows the reported impact of the FRC on the school climate.

Exhibit 38
School Staff Perceptions of the Effects of the Family Resource Center within the School
(n = 295 school staff members)



Source: School Staff Survey, 1996.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

- School staff members were most likely to report that the FRC had increased their sensitivity to and understanding of the needs of children and their families.

- When talking about the benefits of the FRC to the school structure, one teacher commented, "It all fits together as a puzzle... We all have a shared vision and now we can work together... You can come here (FRC) and you're listened to."

- The school staff was less likely to report that the FRC influenced behavioral changes concerning vandalism and graffiti in the school.

- Many school staff members indicated that it is too soon to assess school environment effects, "Change is slow, difficult, and at times painful but, you do see change taking place; [there's] more enthusiasm among students."

- Nine of 12 school principals reported an increase in school staff members' sensitivities to families and 11 reported that the school environment for families has improved as a result of the FRCs.

  "The FRC personnel make a difference in school social issues and there is someone to refer the parent to. It is not necessary to go through welfare or someone else. The programs are here at the school."

Stakeholders' Perceptions of Impact

Other perceptions of the FRCs impact on families and schools were gathered from interviews with stakeholders. Each stakeholder was able to give examples of evidence that the Family Resource Centers are fulfilling their mission. This suggests that the positive reputations of the centers are becoming widespread in the state. Comments ranged from "parents and children seemed happy" to being able to relate a story about a parent who had a bad experience in school and now is on a FRC Advisory Board. All stakeholders commented that many people they know at the community and state level are familiar with FRCs and speak of them in a positive way. Several stated that evidence of the success of the FRCs can be measured by the growth in numbers from three FRCs in 1989 to thirty in 1996. Many more communities believe that an FRC would benefit their schools and families and are seeking state funding to develop FRCs. One stakeholder commented that local realtors were advertising that a certain community had a Family Resource Center.

Each stakeholder reflected on the difficulty of measuring the effects of the centers for families, the schools, and communities. "Prevention is hard to measure," one stakeholder commented. Several could point to short-term benefits such as "500 parents came to an FRC for the parent leadership training program last year" or describing how one community really

"galvanized around the FRC," but most commented on the need for a longitudinal study which would track FRC families through their children's school years in order to determine the important effects of the FRC approach.

Chapter VI. Patterns and Recommendations

Chapter VI. Patterns and Recommendations

The five following exhibits show patterns the evaluation team observed across the 18 centers from evaluation data collected by observations, interviews, focus group discussions, and written surveys. These patterns reflect five features that describe choices that Family Resource Centers make in the operation and delivery of services: location of FRC administrative offices, collaborative arrangements, relationships with fiscal agents, the role of the advisory committee, and staffing the core services. Each pattern has implications for the delivery of services. The reader should note that for each pattern or set of patterns several implications are listed.

Following this section are a series of recommendations to assist state and local officials to assess and improve the model of school-based/linked family support services for children and families in Connecticut. These recommendations are based on findings from a variety of data collection methods and observations from our experiences during the two-year evaluation period.

Exhibit 39 Location of Family Resource Center Administrative Offices	
Patterns Observed	**Resulting Implications**
Most FRCs have administrative offices in a school building.	Builds a collaborative relationship with a respected institution. Facilitates buy-in by school administration. Facilitates formal and informal communication with school staff members. Promotes use of in-kind services from school and sharing of expertise. Many parents volunteering for FRC activities tend to become involved in other school activities. Promotes easy accessibility for many parents. Presents possible challenge of finding sufficient administrative and program space.
A few FRCs have administrative space in a district-owned building such as a preschool building.	Facilitates referral of children and families throughout entire district. Allows for programming for multiple age groups at one time. Conveying consistent FRC "message" in all schools is a challenge. Communicating FRC schedule to a wide population may be difficult.
A few have administrative space in a community-based organization such as a private early child care agency or health facility.	Increases coordination with services in the community-based organization. Increases coordination with services in the community-based organization. Developing strong linkages with schools becomes a challenge. Increases likelihood that recruitment pattern is related more to community-based organizations than to FRCs. Presents challenges to the internal integration of FRC services.

Exhibit 40 Collaborative Arrangements	
Patterns Observed	***Resulting Implications***
Some collaborative arrangements involve shared costs, personnel, space, materials, etc.	Promotes development of shared vision across agencies and services. Increases likelihood of a comprehensive plan for services, not a crisis-by-crisis approach to meeting client needs. Provides holistic family focus versus individualistic perspective. Builds on what services already exist; avoids duplication. Promotes joint training of staff for referrals, joint recruitment of targeted families, and joint planning. Increases likelihood of focusing on longer-term effects and system change. Enables parents to enroll in many services at one time and at more than one site.
Many collaborative arrangements involve a simple exchange or coordination of services to clients.	Increases likelihood that service duplication may not be addressed and services may compete for clients. Increases likelihood that agencies respond to immediate needs rather than long-range goals. Reduces efficient use of resources.

Exhibit 41 Fiscal Agents	
Patterns Observed	***Resulting Implications***
Half of the FRCs have school districts as fiscal agents.	Increases school district ownership of FRC. Increases likelihood that financial support will be continued in school district budget. Promotes similar pay scale for FRC staff members and comparable school staff personnel. Limits flexibility in the use of funds. Limits pursuit of additional funds from certain sources.
Half of the FRCs have a community organization as a fiscal agent.	Increases flexibility in the use of funds. Limits connections to school district to obtain space and in-kind services.

Exhibit 42 Role of the Advisory Committee	
Patterns Observed	***Resulting Implications***
The role of the Advisory Committee in a few centers includes long-range planning, fundraising, support and promotion of the FRC in the community; meetings are held regularly. In many centers, the role of the Advisory Committee includes program planning, meeting the needs of families; meetings are held regularly.	Builds broad base support for FRC. Brings expertise and variety of perspectives. Creates membership with a clear vision of long-range goals. Helps to ensure that FRCs are providing programs to meet local needs. Gives FRC administrator a network to reach out to other constituents.
In a few centers, the role of the Advisory Committee is minimal and meetings are held infrequently.	Limits perspective for program planning. Decreases likelihood of broad base of support.

Exhibit 43 Staffing the Core Services	
Patterns Observed	***Resulting Implications***
In some FRCs, one set of staff members manages and delivers all core services. In many FRCs, staff from different services come together for meetings to provide opportunities to learn about each other's programs.	Promotes a comprehensive assessment of family strengths and needs. Promotes seamless network of services. Increases likelihood that staff discuss and resolve situations concerning families. Increases the coordination of services for families. Better informs staff about outcomes of referrals. Puts staff in a better position to design comprehensive services.
In a few FRCs, some staff specialize, working in only one core service, and do not know or interact with staff from other services.	Increases staff making decisions on their own with little consideration of the benefits that may be gained by working together. Increases likelihood that FRC is described in terms of separate, unique functioning services. Results in less service to families.

Recommendations: Sustaining the Best Qualities of the Family Resource Center Service Delivery Model

Funding: Family Resource Centers need a minimum of five years of predictable funding at approximately $200,000 annually to become stable. FRCs need clear information well in advance about funding levels and technical assistance to enable them to raise local monies.

Concerns about funding were expressed by many FRC administrators during interviews, at workshop training sessions, and as responses on the FRC Profile Survey. Ten of the 18 FRC administrators listed funding as a challenge during the past year. (See "Challenges" in Site Profiles, Chapter VII). Developing and sustaining a successful FRC takes time and committed staff. A tremendous amount of time is required to find qualified, committed staff to coordinate service delivery and recruit families. In order to develop stable centers, we recommend that centers receive guaranteed financial support for a defined period of time long enough to establish identity in the community, at least five years. One option is full funding for three years and then incrementally reduce funding over time.

It is also recommended that minimum annual funding begin at $200,000. This suggested amount is based on information from the FRC Funding Survey and experience with other comparable community-based family support programs. Funding at this level would allow for a full-time program administrator, who would be responsible for program development, community collaboration, fundraising, and supervision of staff; a full-time administrative assistant, with skills to provide Resource and Referral services and run the administrative offices; two or three program staff members, both full-time and part-time, to offer services on-site as determined by the community context such as Families in Training (parenting and home visiting), school age services, and other direct services requested by families (workshops and information sessions); stipends for families needing services not directly provided by the center such as Child Care and Adult Education services; and, finally, funds for staff development, fringe benefits for full-time staff, and other administrative costs. With this level of staffing and flexibility in staffing schedules, the FRC could be open full-time (7 a.m. to 7 p.m. most days of the week), allowing for additional evening and weekend programs. The suggested minimum funding of $200,000 annually could be a combination of state and local funds, including sources such as the school district, United Way, businesses, and grants.

Planing for state support should be communicated clearly so that the administrators can develop and implement realistic plans to obtain funds. To facilitate fundraising efforts by FRCs, we recommend that technical assistance be provided to support fundraising efforts.

Service Flexibility: Require Family Resource Centers to demonstrate availability of core services but not necessarily to provide them if otherwise available.

Family Resource Centers deliver the seven core services within the context of community needs and availability of services and resources. Findings in this report show that Families in Training and Resource and Referral services typically are provided directly by the FRCs and Adult Education classes are offered collaboratively with the adult education network. There is no typical service delivery arrangement for the delivery of other core services; they are delivered in response to the needs and context of the community.

Data from the Evaluation Support System (ESS) showed that several centers also provide services other than the core services such as housing assistance and food supplies for families, enrolling children in school, translating for families, and arranging for health services. FRCs located in urban areas were more likely to report providing these types of services. Based on these findings, it seems inappropriate to expect that each center provide the seven core services regardless of community need and context. In many communities, the provision of these services duplicates existing services. Also, some communities may have greater needs for other services, such as health related services or case management. The expectation that each center provide the seven core services places unnecessary pressure on the center administrators to meet the needs of the grant rather than the needs of families and communities.

We recommend that centers address how they will *arrange* to provide the seven core services or justify the decision not to provide a service in the annual grant application. Centers need increased flexibility to implement service delivery models that are responsive to local needs.

School-Based/Linked Setting: Continue to promote the value of the school-based/linked setting for the delivery of family support services.

Based on findings from surveys, interviews, and focus group discussions with FRC administrators, stakeholders, and school staff members including principals, teachers, and support personnel, it is

clear that the school setting is a strength for a Family Resource Center. The school setting is critical for the FRCs to reach more families, assist transitioning into school, and support children's educational success. The Connecticut State Department of Education can play a key role in the development of relationships between the FRC and school administration. Especially important to the long-term viability and sustainability of the FRCs are their relationships with school superintendents, school board members, and principals. These key stakeholders are in important positions to influence and make decisions about funding, space, and resources. They also play a critical role in community awareness and promoting the FRCs. Therefore, we recommend that the Connecticut State Department of Education take a more active role in promoting the value of the FRCs. This can be done through widespread distribution of information about the FRCs and participation in statewide education conferences. Another approach could be for state staff members to meet with the FRC administrator, school principal, and superintendent (or other central office staff) to discuss the implementation of the FRC grant, upon receipt of funding.

Evaluation: Family Resource Centers are only now at the point where they are likely to conduct local evaluations — they need technical assistance to do so.

The Family Resource Centers did not develop and conduct local evaluations as originally intended. Although the Connecticut State Department of Education wanted each center to provide for local evaluation activities, there was a lack of clarity regarding expectations (i.e., what the activities should look like or what level of resources should be dedicated) and a lack of clarity about the potential benefits to centers individually and to the Family Resource Center system. In addition, FRC administrators across the 18 centers felt burdened by evaluation requests for the state's outside evaluation. Eventually, the issue of local evaluation began to receive increased attention by FRCs only when funding became a critical issue.

We recommend that technical assistance and resources be provided to the centers for purposes of designing and conducting local evaluations and interpreting findings for program improvement. At a minimum, centers should track progress of families on a series of short-term effects and take a look at the progress of program operations in meeting family outcomes and program objectives. Some of the instruments developed by RMC for this evaluation could be used to monitor change over time. Also, a few FRC administrators have developed and conducted evaluations in response to local requests. They could share with other administrators their strategies, experiences, and instruments.

Training sessions, similar to the ones presented by RMC, could be conducted by a trained evaluator several times throughout the year. These sessions would provide to the 18 centers the ongoing discipline to develop and conduct evaluations and a forum to raise issues and discuss results.

Management Information System: Continue the ESS system of data collection about participation that is consistent across all projects.

The Evaluation Support System (ESS) was designed to provide a generic system through which all FRCs could document the same enrollment and participation data in the same format. By the end of the evaluation period all the centers had a working computerized system of tracking participation information about families — a significant program accomplishment. In some cases, centers were inconsistent in reporting data. On the other hand, most of the centers had institutionalized the system and were consistent in collecting information about participants.

We recommend that the ESS continue to serve as a reporting system. The benefits to the continued use of the ESS are obvious: staff members collecting the data are familiar with the format, most centers have incorporated the system into their administrative routines, administrators of new centers can implement an ongoing system as they develop their programs, and ongoing data collection findings can be compared to the baseline information presented in this report.

To continue implementation of the ESS, ongoing technical assistance needs to be provided for software training and general computer maintenance. Resources also need to be committed to collecting and summarizing the data across centers and providing each administrator with the capability to use the information for center specific reporting purposes. If the ESS cannot be maintained, we recommend that the system collect the same data elements as the ESS in paper form.

Using this Report: Look for multiple ways to use this report to further the growth of the Family Resource Centers.

The evaluation findings describe the structure of the FRCs, use of services, and the perceived effects of FRC services on families and children. Besides providing a picture of the FRCs, these findings can be used as the foundation for ongoing discussions about the ways to sustain and improve the Family Resource Centers and to determine what information needs to be collected to answer questions about changes attributable to participation in FRC services.

On a program level, administrators could use this information to think about ways to improve delivery of services such as how can collaborative arrangements be strengthened, Advisory Committees' roles be expanded to support the FRCs, and relationships with school staff members be improved. In addition, FRC's could use the data in this report for comparison purposes and monitoring changes in overall program effects on families and schools. Administrators should be urged to use at least some instruments, i.e., those that were developed for the cross-site evaluation or new instruments adapted from the original base set common to all projects.

On a state level, the Connecticut State Department of Education could use the findings to stimulate discussions related to improving program quality, such as identifying characteristics that indicate or signal quality in programs, providing a focus for local evaluations, and developing guidelines of important program characteristics for new programs. We suggest that the state take a leadership role in working with local FRCs to identify quality characteristics of programs and to re-establish a reporting system on selected characteristics about FRC programs and the populations served by the FRCs. Working with local administrators in developing this system will facilitate buy-in on a local level and guarantee a common understanding of program goals and outcomes. Using an external facilitator skilled in measuring program outcomes will help guarantee that all perspectives are considered in developing a state-level reporting system.

The Connecticut State Department of Education is in the position to take a leadership role in working with other state-level collaborators such as the Division of Social Services, Department of Health, foundations, and other agencies to promote the Family Resource Center model. Building a network of support systems for families requires collaborative relationships at a local level as well as a state level. We think that this report can be used across state-level agencies, foundations, and organizations to initiate discussions about program quality and indicators of quality, ways to identify program effectiveness, and actions by state-level policymakers to facilitate the implementation of quality and effective Family Resource Centers in Connecticut's communities.

Chapter VII. Site Profiles

Betances Family Resource Center, Hartford, CT

Community Setting

The FRC consists of a large classroom used for full-time Preschool Child Care and small rooms for FRC offices, located in the basement of the Betances School, a K-6 elementary school. Several nearby classrooms are used for School Age Child Care and other programs as needed. These spaces also allow for summer activities, Adult Education classes, and Positive Youth Development activities such as Girl Scouts, homework help, and arts and crafts classes. Family Child Care Provider Training is provided at La Casa de Puerto Rico, Inc. and C.D.A. training takes place at a local community college. A home visitation program takes staff into homes to provide parenting education to mothers of young children. Space is a chronic problem, particularly for the child care components, and the FRC hopes to expand into another building near the school.

Betances School is in Hartford, one of the poorest medium-sized cities in the U.S. The FRC at Betances School serves families living in two of Hartford's most impoverished neighborhoods. The majority of the area's population is Puerto Rican/Latino (70%).

The Advisory Committee meets once a month and includes representatives from La Casa de Puerto Rico, a local social services agency and parent agency of the FRC; staff of the FRC; the Board of Education; parents; and other community people. Funding and program development are the committee's main activities.

Integrated Services for Families & Children

In one location, parents can enroll their children in child care, health care, school, and extra-curricular activities and they can enroll themselves in adult education classes. Staff members make sure that services not available through the FRC are provided through referrals to services elsewhere in the city. The prime focus of the FRC is child care, a service in great demand in this community. By providing on-site child care, working parents can have both their school and preschool age children in the same place, with care being provided throughout the work day. As the trainer and supporter for child care providers in the community, the FRC extends the quality of care into the homes of neighborhood families.

The bilingual and multicultural staff members of the FRC provide a critical link between families and the services they need. Understanding needs and responding to them in appropriate ways has been important in gaining the trust and participation of parents and students who, although Spanish speaking, are often from different countries. There are five full-time FRC staff including the administrator, parent educator, head teacher, teacher, and secretary/ bookkeeper. Five additional part-time teachers work in Preschool and School Age Child Care. These staff members work closely with the staff of La Casa de Puerto Rico, Inc. and weekly meetings between them have become important to integrating services provided by both agencies. Continuing education of staff is a high priority in staff development. Maintaining a qualified staff on a budget limited by what the FRC can charge parents for tuition is a continuing challenge.

Collaboration

La Casa de Puerto Rico, Inc. and the school district have been the primary partners with the Betances FRC. These relationships have evolved over the years. La Casa de Puerto Rico, Inc. at one time collaborated with the FRC by recruiting and training family child care providers for Hartford. Responsibility for this activity has recently transferred to the FRC. La Casa de Puerto Rico, Inc. now primarily provides housing information and placement to Betances families and space for FRC-related meetings. In the past, the Betances School administration and staff limited their involvement with the FRC to providing space and referrals of families to FRC programs. Recently the school has begun taking a more active role, jointly sponsoring events like a job fair with the FRC. The Hartford Board of Education has also played an important supportive role, offering various services and programs to families participating in the FRC. Hartford Hospital, through its health and dental clinics in the Betances school, is another major partner. Dozens of other public and private agencies have also collaborated to provide space, services, personnel for programs, in-kind donations, and information to the FRC for Betances families.

School Connections

The FRC and the Betances School have a cooperative relationship but they operate independently of each other. The FRC benefits from the school by having space, an on-site population, and resources such as a health clinic and social work staff available to its participating families. The FRC provides child care and after school services that the school would normally not be able to offer students and their families. The school has also received positive publicity about the FRC. The FRC and the school occasionally co-sponsor events but are not actively involved in developing or managing programs together.

Successes

- Working parents are happy because the FRC provides a much needed service in their community: quality child care
- Growth in the number of child care training classes offered after taking the program over from La Casa de Puerto Rico, Inc.
- Job fair for the community co-sponsored by the Department of Social Services, Betances School and the FRC

Challenges

- Finding funds to build and maintain the FRC programs
- Maintaining well-qualified, highly trained staff on the low salaries that the FRC can afford
- Building a stronger partnership with the school

Bridgeport Family Resource Center, Bridgeport, CT

Community Setting

The FRC was originally funded in 1994 and is located in basement rooms (previously locker rooms) of Bassick High School which houses Pre-K and K classes and is across the street from Elias Howe Elementary School. Many FRC services (Preschool and School Age Child Care) are offered through collaboration at sites due to the limited FRC space. FRC staff continue to be very creative in the use of their space: a classroom for adults quickly becomes the child care center by moving furniture and filling the space with pillows and appropriate toys. The program administrator's office often becomes a meeting room for parents. In spite of its limited space, the Bridgeport FRC is a place where the parents "hang out" after their children go to school and where they receive needed support with parenting issues and training for transition to employment.

Bridgeport's child poverty rate is among the worst in the country for a city of its size. The population served is 70% Spanish and 25% African-American. Spanish is spoken by the majority of families and all staff members speak Spanish fluently. There is a high incidence of teenage pregnancy among the FRC population. More than 90% of the children in the Elias Howe Elementary School are eligible for free or reduced lunch. Most of the children and parents who come to the FRC live within the neighborhood but others walk as many as 15 blocks to attend FRC activities. Many FRC families lack basic needs. Staff members see one of their primary roles as building parents' confidence to advocate for themselves and their families.

Nine of the 16 members of the FRC Advisory Committee are parents representing a range of ethnicities (Hispanic, Portuguese, African American, White). The remaining members are from area agencies, the Board of Education, local corporations, and volunteer groups. The primary role of the Advisory Committee is to identify needs and services for families and oversee the Center. The input and direction provided by parents are key factors contributing to the success of the FRC. The Advisory Committee collaborates with other parent organizations (Parent Advisory Committee at the Elias Howe School, Even Start, and the Parent Center) to form a city-wide parent network.

Integrated Services for Families & Children

The goal of the Bridgeport Board of Education is to provide "a seamless network" of services to "improve student readiness for school and facilitate increased parental empowerment." The goal of the FRC is to be a "family" for its clients — to support and encourage growth. The staff pulls services together based on where families are. For instance, the Adult Education classes primarily include ESL, GED in Spanish, and citizenship classes. Parents help to prioritize class topics and the daily FRC schedule. Topics for parent workshops for Families in Training (FIT) are identified by parents, and sometimes conducted by parents. Playgroups are parent-driven. Preschool and School Age Child Care are provided by contract with local child care centers and at existing programs in schools. Many families do not need full-time child care, but express the need for parenting workshops and peer support groups. The FRC has developed a relationship with the local family child care association and provides limited support to the family child care providers. The FRC staff refers children to existing Positive Youth Development (PYD) services due to limited space and funding.

FRC staff members advocate with existing programs and voluntary groups to increase PYD services for area youth. The FRC's primary service which integrates its "seamless web" for

families is Resource and Referral (R & R). Families are interviewed by the program administrator who matches FRC services to families' needs. The staff use INFOLINE as a resource and have an extensive knowledge of community resources and services.

Most staff members, both volunteer and paid, are from the neighborhood and are very familiar with the families and area services. Staff are free to start new activities as the situation warrants and meet regularly to coordinate activities. Adequate staffing is limited by funding.

Collaboration

The services of the FRC are largely due to its extensive collaborative arrangements for direct service, volunteer support, in-kind services, funding partnerships, and advocacy services for families. The FRC lists more than 40 public and private agencies, corporations, and volunteer groups as collaborators. Some collaborative arrangements are by contract (Commonwealth Academy Agreement) to pay for slots for children referred by the FRC. Other collaborative arrangements occur on an "as needed" basis. For instance, the Health Department, Police, and Child Guidance Center come to the FRC to talk to parents when requested. "Collaboration is the thing that makes this (FRC) work the best... (the FRC) is giving parents services they need."

School Connections

Many parents come to the FRC after they take their children to school. The staff feels the FRC attracts families because of its location. Parents can find the FRC easily and are comfortable going to the high school, because other services such as preschool, kindergarten, Head Start classes, and a program for teen moms are also located in the high school. The FRC serves as a drop-in center. There are other drop-in centers in the city, but none are as busy. The FRC benefits high school students because they frequently come to work with the young children and with the FRC computers. The superintendent, principals, and some school staff members are very supportive of the FRC and are frequently used as resources. Over time, most school personnel are supporting the "new idea" of the FRC.

Successes

- Development of collaborations with school and community resources to respond to family needs
- Trust between staff and families
- Recruitment by word of mouth by parents about the FRC

Challenges

- Need for more space
- Need for more adult education classes to transition parents into employment
- Need for time for outreach to secure more community resources to support families

Danbury Family Resource Center, Danbury, CT

Community Setting

The FRC was initially funded in 1994 and is located on the Mill Ridge Campus which houses Mill Ridge Primary School, Mill Ridge Intermediate School, kindergarten, preschool special education, Head Start and Even Start programs. The child-related services and adult education services take place in the schools and share space as best as possible with other existing preschool and school-age services. The administrative offices and Resource and Referral services are in an adjacent community building but still on the school campus.

The FRC serves families from all socioeconomic backgrounds. The Mill Ridge School campus is located next to moderate and low-income housing developments. The racial background of families in the neighborhood is 67% white, 17% African American, 9% Hispanic, 7% Asian American and 3 % Native American. Twenty-five percent (25%) of the children receive free and reduced lunch at school and 15% of the children come from non-English speaking homes. In the summer of 1996, the FRC and collaborators operated a very successful summer youth program/child care (150 participants) on the Mill Ridge Campus. The impetus for this effort came from the Mill Ridge Coalition, a group of staff, parents, and city employees who had organized to address problems and concerns related to Mill Ridge. The summer program (Sun Sational Summer '96) included neighborhood people as staff members and volunteers and gave an overall positive message about Mill Ridge.

The FRC Advisory Committee is in the process of being redesigned to become a part of the Danbury Community Partnership for Children and Families. This partnership has representation from social and education agencies, city, government, school district, parent, and cultural groups. The superintendent initiated this partnership which received a planning grant and, more recently, an implementation grant for services for children, ages birth to eight years. This redesign effort was undertaken to eliminate duplication of services and ensure that all human services were integrated into the community human service system. The FRC is a significant partner in this effort.

Integrated Services for Families & Children

The current program director of the FRC is also the Director of Continuing Education and Special Programs. She has been involved since the inception of the concept of the FRC. Her approach has always been to integrate and therefore maximize services for children and families. FRC staff members are knowledgeable about all services available for families. This is accomplished through joint training and staff development opportunities throughout the school district and through integrating the ESL Reception Center with the FRC Resource and Referral service. As an example of integrated services, Danbury Public Schools submitted a consolidated application for Even Start and the FRC grants. Also, Preschool Child Care services are provided in collaboration with the extended-day kindergarten and School Age Child Care services are offered in seven schools, including Mill Ridge. Children are transported from schools which do not have the program, to programs in nearby schools.

The FRC runs a summer vacation and holiday program. Fees are collected for the programs on a sliding scale. Positive Youth Development (PYD) services are integrated into the After School Program. PYD services are provided jointly with the YMCA, other youth-serving agencies, and volunteer programs. Families in Training (FIT) program, which benefits families with young children, is offered. Home visits are

another link to provide families with needed services. The FRC continues to collaborate with Even Start, Literacy Volunteers, and the Adult Education Program to provide the FRC adult education services. The FRC coordinates its Family Child Care Provider Training with Child Care Connections, targeting the Mill Ridge neighborhood whenever possible. This service is intended to increase the availability of child care in the area.

FRC staff members respect the families they serve and work toward supporting the whole family. Staff members need to work as a team in an often hectic environment. Paid FRC staff members include a child care coordinator, youth development coordinator, two parent educators, school age child care assistant, and a Resource and Referral staff member. Other resources support the FRC program director and other component expenses. Some of the staff is from the neighborhood which increases families' comfort level with the FRC.

Collaboration

The FRC works collaboratively with the agencies represented on the Community Partnership for Children and Families to set the stage for the FRC activities. The FRC works very closely with Head Start and Even Start (e.g., consolidated grant application) to share materials, space, training, planning projects and events, and to seek joint funding. The Summer of '96 FRC activity is another excellent example of a collaborative venture (school, FRC, Girl Scouts, Park and Recreation, Youth Services, Housing Authority). Agencies realize that they must make connections to provide affordable services for families. Collaborative efforts in Danbury have resulted in high expectations, but not without a lot of hard work. Collaboration takes more planning time but produces a richer program (e.g., operators' manual for activities in the Summer of '96 program).

School Connections

The Danbury FRC is tailored to the families' needs and existing community services, but gains its legitimacy by being connected to the school. Some of the child care workers are parents from the neighborhood. This has helped parents trust and increasingly use the FRC services. Most of the children can walk to school from home and find the after- school, summer, and holiday activities easily accessible. The support of the superintendent and principals is a critical factor to the success of the FRC. It has gained acceptance from the teachers more slowly. As the FRC programs have increased in popularity with the families it serves, the teachers have seen the benefits to families and children transitioning into the regular school. The FRC benefits from many in-kind services (e.g., classroom space, utilities, telephone, volunteers, director's salary, accounting). The mission of the Danbury FRC is to create a strong support system for families which in turn supports the schools' role in educating all of its students.

Successes

- Increased collaboration with community agencies with similar missions
- Extended-day kindergarten child care program
- Reorganization of administration in the Community Resource Center

Challenges

- Sharing of school resources (space/equipment)
- Integrating FRC services into the life of the school
- Increasing adult education opportunities for hard to reach and most in need parents

East Hartford Family Resource Center, Hartford, CT

Community Setting

For most of its history, the East Hartford Family Resource Center was centrally located in a community center near one of the elementary schools it serves. Recently the FRC relocated to a local alternative school, Sunset Ridge School, which provides several large rooms and storage space for the FRC. At the previous location, the FRC provided Preschool Child Care; Families In Training (FIT) playgroups, developmental screening, and parent support; Adult Education literacy, GED, ESL, Red Cross and parenting classes; Family Child Care Provider Training; and Resource and Referral services. Some Families In Training home visits took place at parents' homes. All of these services are continuing at the new site with the exception of the Preschool Child Care, which will be provided through referral to other child care providers. School Age Child Care is provided through referral to the YMCA which offers this service at a local school to all children in the school district. Some Families In Training support groups, playgroups, and parenting programs are offered regularly at other schools in the district. A Positive Youth Development ROPE program is provided through a contract with the Youth Service Bureau at a local school.

East Hartford is a growing urban community with more and varied minority groups represented as it expands. With the loss of several large employers and a declining tax base, economic and social issues are an increasing concern, particularly the growing poverty and health care problems in the community.

Parents participating in FRC programs make up 51% of the FRC's Advisory Committee. The Committee is very active and meets monthly. They provide advice and guidance to staff concerning the FRC's programs and services, suggest improvements, and identify community needs for service.

Integrated Services for Families & Children

The FRC has always provided a range of services to families. These include programs that serve parents with very young children at home, parents of school-age children, teen parents, students, and adults. The new location in a school that serves a student population aged five to 18 makes it even more likely that families will participate in FRC programs throughout their children's school years. By offering diverse informational, recreational, and educational programs primarily in one location, often with the same staff, parents and children become familiar with the FRC, its programs, and staff members. This comfort with the FRC motivates parents to enroll themselves or their children first in one program and then another as their needs change over time.

The FRC is staffed by part-time personnel. They include a director, parent educator, playgroup coordinator and support staff, (i.e., secretary, paraprofessionals, babysitters, and volunteers). All the professional staff are highly educated and specialists in their fields.

Collaboration

The East Hartford FRC works with many local community agencies and organizations either to send or receive referrals. The FRC provides space for other agencies to offer related programs and workshops to local families. Until recently, the school district has been a major source of financial and in-kind support, and the East Hartford Housing Authority played a major role by providing facilities for the FRC in the local community center. With the move into a school building, the Housing Authority's role has been reduced, and collaboration with the school district has increased.

Other major partnerships include a collaboration with Head Start to share a staff person to provide FIT and parenting classes to families with children in Head Start. This partnership was extended to the local Adult Education department which provides GED and ESL classes at the FRC and promotes FRC parenting classes as Adult Education courses. Another important relationship has been between the East Hartford Birth to Three program and the FRC which work together to organize workshops and share space and program materials. Because staff members from all of these different programs are school employees, they often serve on the same committees, which facilitates communication and prevents program duplication.

School Connections

Although the fiscal agent for the East Hartford FRC is the local school district, until the recent move by the FRC into the Sunset Ridge School, the FRC was not school-based. Consequently the FRC was less directly involved with the activities and population of a specific school, and served families in the larger community. With the move into a school, the FRC expects to have greater visibility among the school staff, parents, and students, increased support from the school district, and a greater impact on the school-oriented population.

Successes

- Making the transition from a school-linked FRC located in a community center to a school-based FRC located in a school
- Effective collaborations with other school program staff and other agencies to provide programs
- Continuing growth in program enrollment

Challenges

- Coordination and communication with schools when the FRC was not located in a school
- Increasing the awareness and knowledge of FRC programs in the community
- Changing the perception of the FRC from a place where parents are merely recipients of services to a place where parents participate in the development and provision of those services

Family Resource Network, Weston, Wilton, Westport, & Norwalk, CT

Community Setting

The Family Resource Network (FRN) is the first multi-district, urban-suburban FRC. Four communities are served by the Network: Weston, Wilton, Westport, and Norwalk. Services are provided at regularly scheduled hours in schools and at other locations in each of the communities instead of one single school site. Administrative offices are located in the United Way offices in Westport. Multi-site programming offers families the opportunity to access services at a variety of times and locations and encourages "border crossings." In addition to the services provided by the FRN, staff members work with families to connect them to existing services in all four communities.

Of the combined population, minorities make up approximately 23%. Norwalk is the only urban site among the four communities and also has been designated as a "priority" school district by the federal government. Westport, Weston, and Wilton are bordering suburban communities. The composition of the four towns reflects a broad range of ethnic, religious, and economic populations. Common to all four are issues related to two-parent working families, long commutes, no extended family available to help with child care, and isolation from other families.

The FRN has three different committee structures: a Steering Committee, three Advisory Committees, and a Parent Council. The Steering Committee is composed of representatives from the four participating Boards of Education, the United Way, major funders, several community professionals, and business representatives. This committee is responsible for sustaining the vision and management of the FRN. Approximately 20 parents representing the four communities serve on the Parent Council. In addition to providing ideas and direction to the program, these parents contribute hands-on support on a voluntary basis. Since the inception of the Network, local Advisory Committees have served to monitor the implementation of the FRN in each of the respective communities. Recent discussions have focused on restructuring the Advisory Committees to allow for increased inter-town generation of ideas and shared solutions to common concerns.

Integrated Services for Families & Children

The FRN capitalizes on the quality services existing in the area to enhance its own programs and to link families to appropriate service providers. Preschool and School Age Child Care are provided by referrals to existing services. Subsidies are available to families. Providers in the four communities work together to decide which families are eligible for a subsidy. The subsidy is then given directly to the family to choose a child care provider. Families in Training was the key component in the formation of the FRN and is offered directly. Positive Youth Development activities are arranged collaboratively with local agencies to provide teen pregnancy prevention for at-risk adolescents and to direct a multi-district after-school service-learning program for students. Adult Education and Family Child Care Provider Training are offered by referral. Resource and Referral services are used extensively by participating families. The FRN helps families to determine their needs and to use INFOLINE as a resource for finding appropriate services.

For families, the FRN provides affordable and accessible opportunities. Programs typically are offered in more than one community. In most communities, parents are willing to cross town boundaries to attend programs. As a result, parents have the chance to expand their connections to resources in the neighboring towns. FRC staff members report that parents participating in FRN programs become more savvy about what to look for in services and about identifying their children's needs. Parenting programs have been beneficial in linking parents with other parents. Parents report that the FRN is a place where they are able to receive services

and access information without having to label themselves or their children.

The two FRN full-time staff members are the administrator and the family resource specialist. The part-time staff includes a program assistant, two part-time parent educators, and several volunteers. The FRN works with many professionals across the four communities to help conduct programs and workshops. Staff meetings usually are arranged separately for each component.

Collaboration

The philosophy underlying the network is to use existing resources in the community to offer the seven core services of the Family Resource Center model. Formal arrangements are in place for the provision of the Positive Youth Development and many of the parenting education programs to clarify responsibilities and commitment. Informal collaborative arrangements for the provision of the other components allow for flexibility and expansion as participation in the FRN increases.

School Connections

The FRN is unique because it deals with four separate school systems. The FRN operates cooperatively with the schools, using space provided by each school on a regular basis. Each school derives something different from the FRN, depending on the local needs. The level of involvement by teachers, program administrators, and principals varies by school needs. Although the connections in each school vary, FRN staff members see several benefits to the school such as increasing school readiness for young children and school comfort levels for parents.

Successes

- Increased coordination of programming between the Families In Training program and community-based programs
- Concentration on a "wellness" approach to programming, i.e., focusing on family strengths rather than deficits which resulted in increased use of Resource and Referral services by parents and providers
- Increased movement and communication among families and providers from all four communities, in particular, increased cooperation among like providers from different communities to develop goals and strategies

Challenges

- Increasing the involvement of school principals and other personnel
- Increasing financial support
- Creating a comprehensive vision to mobilize community to support the Family Resource Network

Groton Family Resource Center, Groton, CT

Community Setting

The Groton Family Resource Center is located at the Eastern Point School. The space allocated for the FRC is in the basement of the school. The FRC has a well-equipped child care room organized into developmentally appropriate areas. This space is not handicapped accessible. The FRC primarily serves families whose children attend the Eastern Point School. There is not adequate transportation for children and adults outside of the school catchment area to access FRC services at the Eastern Point School.

The city of Groton has experienced a lot of changes in the past ten years. It is heavily dependent upon the military. The primary employers are Electric Boat and Pfizer. With the large cuts in military spending, the towns' economy is suffering. Since 1991, the numbers of children eligible for free and reduced lunch has risen dramatically. Currently, approximately 50% of children are eligible for free and reduced lunch. Many families have been forced to leave the area due to the "reduction in force" of the military.

Parents participate on the FRC Advisory Committee which includes FRC staff members and, when possible, local collaborators. As the program expands, the goal is to broaden representation on the Advisory Committee. To date, attempts to recruit more members have not proved successful, but new strategies are developing as the program changes. Beginning this fiscal year (1996-97), the Child and Family Agency of Southwestern Connecticut will administer the Groton FRC.

Integrated Services for Families & Children

The FRC focuses primarily on Preschool Child Care services. It provides a program for 20 children and always has a waiting list. School Age Child Care is offered by referral only due to insufficient FRC funds. The FRC provides Positive Youth Development (PYD) services by co-sponsoring existing programs either by additional funding or by sharing staff members. FRC funds have been able to provide support for PYD services for middle and high school students. Families in Training (FIT) services include play groups and home visiting. This service is offered to 10 families. FIT was provided in 1994-95 through an interagency agreement with Project LEARN. The FRC is unable to continue this collaborative arrangement. FRC Adult Education services are provided by the state regional Adult Education program. An ESL program is offered on site during the day. Night classes are offered at the high school. The FRC provides child care for those attending the class. Family Child Care Provider Training is offered through a collaborative arrangement with the Regional Child Care Enhancement Program (RCCEP). The FRC funds scholarships for child care providers to attend training programs at RCCEP. The FRC runs a lending library on site which is available to all Groton child care providers. The FRC's Resource and Referral component is maintained through close ties with INFOLINE and is the primary means for obtaining information about services for families. FRC families are often uncomfortable calling INFOLINE directly. The FRC assists with that first contact.

The FRC fully staffs the Preschool Child Care program. The FRC master teacher often provides the Resource and Referral service for families that have preschoolers in the program. The administrator performs many other duties: arranges programs with collaborators, develops curriculum with staff in the preschool program, seeks fund raising opportunities, and performs other administrative tasks. There is close communication among all FRC staff members. They meet frequently and all feel a sense of ownership to build the program together. One

successful strategy is a log where each staff member records referrals and activities with families, and is a source of information for follow-up.

Collaboration

The Groton FRC relies on collaborations to offer many of the FRC services. Limited funding is an on-going problem. Since 1991, the Groton school system has had two superintendents and the Eastern Point School has had at least two principals. As the new school administration comes to see the value of the FRC, the program administrator feels the FRC services will expand. Leadership and cooperation from the principal is critical to the continuation of the Groton FRC.

School Connections

To be fully integrated into the school climate, the Groton FRC needs to gain more visibility in the school and develop a closer relationship with school staff members. The FRC staff has little opportunity to talk with the school staff. The school secretary gives families the FRC telephone number when asked. Many school staff members do not understand the mission of the FRC or know about the range of activities. The FRC program administrator has been invited to be on the school improvement committee.

Successes

- Completed NAEYC accreditation process
- Increased contact with high school/middle school students
- Trustworthy working relationship between FRC staff and collaborators

Challenges

- Turnover in school administration
- Planning with teachers in the school
- Develop new approaches to provide FRC services in Groton through contact with New London community-based organizations

Killingly Family Resource Center, Killingly, CT

Community Setting

The FRC has been operated by the Killingly School District since 1989. Administrative offices and many of the FRC services are located in the Goodyear Early Childhood Center. Some services are located off site and operated by collaborating agencies such as Positive Youth Development (PYD) services. All center services are currently provided in an alternative site because of a million dollar building renovation. This renovation demonstrates the community support behind the expanding services at the Goodyear Early Childhood Center. The superintendent regards the FRC as the nucleus of the support services for families in the community.

Killingly has a population of approximately 15,000 with a total school enrollment of about 3,000 students. Fifty percent of the preschool students are reported as eligible for free and reduced lunch. Killingly has a high drop-out rate, a high teenage pregnancy rate, and a high incidence of low birth weight babies. Unemployment also is high. Killingly is predominantly a white, blue-collar community with small numbers of African-American, Hispanic, and Asian families.

The FRC has an Advisory Committee consisting of Goodyear Center staff and parents who also participate on several other committees in the community. The FRC director reports directly to the Board of Education and also serves on the local school improvement committee. Meetings with outside collaborators are held as needed. Advisory Board meetings are held monthly and during the summer the members plan the program goals for the coming year. The FRC director also participates in a community group doing a community-wide needs assessment.

Integrated Services for Families & Children

The FRC provides all core services for families. At the initial contact meeting with a family, staff members identify the families' service interest and needs. Most families come to the FRC needing early childhood services, but families find that they can access many family support services. Any staff member can provide service information and make appropriate referrals and follow up. The staff wants FRC services to be a "seamless" web of support for families. The FRC provides full-time child care on site. If there is a waiting list, families are referred to INFOLINE for a list of child care openings. School Age Child Care is provided at Killingly Memorial or Central School with transportation from the Intermediate School and local Catholic elementary school. The FRC collaborates with the local adult education agency for services but plans to expand services when the site renovations are completed. Workshop and home visits are offered to local family child care providers. The FRC refers children to the Killingly Youth Club and the Quinebaug Valley Youth & Family Services for Positive Youth Development. The FRC works closely with both organizations to plan for new youth programs. Resource and Referral services are provided directly by the FRC staff at the center.

The FRC staff includes a director, secretary, teachers, aides for both the Preschool Child Care and School Age Child Care services, and parent educators. The Killingly School District provides a great deal of in-kind staff time (social worker, special education consultant, nurse), space, custodial services, and many other benefits. The school district views the FRC staff as school staff members. The FRC staff's shared vision is to provide "what's good for kids," and to operate as a team with flexibility and mutual respect.

Collaboration

The FRC maintains both formal (for preschool and adult education services) and informal collaborative arrangements for services for families. The goal for collaboration is to prevent service duplication and provide access for comprehensive services for families comfortably and efficiently. The key to the success of the collaborative arrangements is the direct personal contact among collaborators and deciding early in the negotiating process what each will contribute and who will report to whom and how often. Successful collaboration helps families transition between programs and into different phases of life. Some examples of collaborative arrangements include EASTCON Northeast Regional Adult Education, Northeast Family Service Coordination Center, Killingly Public Schools' Special Education Department, and the Teen Pregnancy Prevention Advisory Committee.

School Connections

The FRC maintains relationships with schools at all levels, from the school board and superintendent to teaching and school support staff. The FRC staff has been accepted by most of the school staff and has administrative leadership through the superintendent. These relationships help families in many ways: schools give out information about the FRC, families have easier transitions to public school programs, and the FRC and school staff work as a team to maximize resources for families. The FRC has both formal and informal relationships with school personnel. The FRC receives its operating grant through the Killingly School District but manages its finances independently which allows for more flexibility. The challenge of providing FRC services at a school site is always space. The recent building renovation and expansion of the Goodyear Early Child Care Center is a testimony to the successful relationship between the FRC and school district. Recently, the Killingly Board of Education set a goal to have a parent support room in all schools within the district.

Successes

- Improved program quality through increased professionalism of staff and increased support from school staff
- Receiving a "Promising Practices" award for the preschool special education inclusion program
- NAEYC accreditation

Challenges

- Maintaining a level of quality programming with reduced funding
- Providing quality programs for teenagers and teen parents
- Keeping up with evaluation requirements while responsible for day to day operations

Manchester Memorial Hospital Family Support and Resource Center Manchester, CT

Community Setting

The Family Support and Resource Center in Manchester, CT is both a hospital-based and school-based center. The hospital has operated a family support center for the past 12 years. When the Department of Education Family Resource Center (FRC) federal grant became available, the hospital extended the family support program and located the FRC in the Washington Elementary School. Head Start is also housed in the building and a town recreation center is attached to the school.

Washington Elementary School is located on the west side of town. The neighborhood is densely populated. About 38% of the families have low or moderate incomes and approximately 10% of the households are headed by single parents between the ages of 18-39 years. Thirty-four percent (34%) of the students are minorities. The community has a large student turnover rate; approximately 66% of the students are in the school system for one year or less.

The Advisory Committee consists of community professionals, agency representatives, and school representatives including a parent from the Washington Elementary School. The committee is responsible for promoting the FRC in the community and helping the administrator create a future vision for the FRC. The Board of Directors at the hospital are responsible for final decisions.

Integrated Services for Families & Children

The Families In Training Program (FIT) and Resource and Referral services are administered by the FRC at the Washington School. Instead of providing Preschool Child Care services directly, the FRC supports existing preschool families and staff by offering financial scholarships, staff development training, and parent education. Financial support also is provided for school age children to attend summer day camps with the Recreation Department, as well as referrals to other state and town funded programs. In conjunction with local agencies, the FRC provides program planning and implementation for school age children. For example, the FRC recently implemented the federal Read-Write-Now Program which involved over 600 school-age children in the city. Adult Education, Positive Youth Development, and Family Child Care Provider Training services are offered through collaboration with existing local services and networks. The FRC provides education through a newsletter to a local network of family child care providers. Resource and Referral services are used extensively by participants.

The FRC combines programming and funding from several state agencies to offer a continuum of services from pre-natal through adulthood. These services include prenatal screenings, assessments, and education through Healthy Families, CT as well as other prevention programs through their contract as a family support site.

FRC staff members, including the administrator, are employed part-time. Staff positions include parent educators, outreach workers, and volunteers. The FRC model is strengthened by the diversity of staff members which includes a child development specialist, a teen specialist, and a parent educator who also is a nurse. Staff meet together monthly and the administrator meets individually with staff members for updates. Many training opportunities have been made available to FRC staff.

Collaboration

According to the administrator, the key elements for successful collaborations include clearly defined roles, each partner knowing its market and population, and providing good support for those persons who can make decisions. Formal agreements have been created for the provision of Preschool and School Age Child Care services. These arrangements facilitate clarity of role and responsibilities of collaborating partners. Informal arrangements are used for the delivery of the other FRC services. These arrangements occur by sharing information, providing information for newsletters, and by participating on other community based committees.

Collaboration among community agencies has increased during the last several years as local resources have become more limited. The FRC administrator has taken an active role in the development of the Manchester Grant Consortium which was created about one year ago to generate joint funding sources for local agencies. To avoid duplication of services, FRC staff collaborate with many community services and have developed extensive Resource and Referral services for families.

School Connections

In the Washington Elementary School, the FRC is located in a former staff lounge. Space and accessibility are at a premium in the school. FRC staff members attend teacher meetings as a means of keeping school personnel informed of the various FRC activities offered for students and families. One benefit of this visibility has been that teachers are feeling more comfortable approaching the FRC staff and providing programming suggestions. For example, one teacher has requested self-esteem building workshops for students.

Washington Elementary School is located within walking distance from home for most of the families. Consequently, families and their children are less dependent on transportation to attend the FRC's family support programs. Parents report that the non-judgmental environment of the FRC has promoted their use of other community services and has enhanced their families' transition to the school.

Successes

- Increase in the availability of programs
- Increase in the number of staff hours has increased the availability of direct services
- Recognition as an integral program in the community

Challenges

- Gain funding to continue the FRC
- Implement a wider variety of programming
- Increase administrative support in the school for the FRC

Meriden Family Resource Network, Meriden, CT

Community Setting

The Meriden FRC was created from a grant developed by the Child Guidance Clinic for Central Connecticut in collaboration with the Meriden Board of Education and several social service agencies. Services are provided in four elementary schools with the John Barry School as the primary site. In these schools, the physical settings include a variety of diverse locations such as gymnasium, cafeteria, kindergarten room, media center, and music room. Adequate transportation to the FRC locations is an ongoing issue.

Meriden has a population of 60,000 with about 8,000 school aged children. Twenty-three percent (23%) of the students are eligible for free and reduced lunches. Hispanics make up approximately 30% of the population. The town is going through a cultural transition as the Latino population increases. Many residents commute daily to other locations in Connecticut for work.

The Advisory Committee is composed of interested parents and representatives from the Board of Education, local elementary school sites, and program collaboration partners. Meetings are held monthly at participating elementary schools. The committee acts as the decision making body for FRC programming, sets policies regarding components, reviews and evaluates programs, and determines guidelines for future planning.

Integrated Services for Families & Children

The Families in Training (FIT), Family Child Care Provider Training, and Resource and Referral services are administered directly by the FRC. One of FIT's features is the Parents Learning About Young Children (PLAY) program. Services provided by this program include parent/child play groups, outreach and home visits, parent education, monitoring of child development, preschool screening, and a toy lending library. Families are referred to other collaborating agencies in the community for Preschool Child Care, School Age Child Care, Positive Youth Development, and Adult Education. FRC staff members work to ensure that participating families are aware of other community services they may need by providing ongoing information and referral services.

Parent/child interactive play groups offered by the PLAY program have fostered an increase in parent self-confidence and parent/child emotional bonding. The play groups provide an opportunity for parents to talk informally with parent educators and other parents about child development issues. Through the Resource and Referral service, families also gain familiarity with services offered by the other local agencies.

Staffing of the Meriden FRC includes a full-time director and one full-time parent educator. Staff meetings are held weekly.

Collaboration

Ongoing communication between key collaborating agencies in Meriden has been the key to serving families effectively. Formal collaborative arrangements have been established with partner agencies providing FIT services. By documenting formal agreements, each agency is clear about the roles and responsibilities for program implementation. Informal arrangements for the provision of the other services are reported as beneficial in terms of support, convenience, and cooperative programming. Maintaining interagency collaborations can be challenging, especially in reaching a common understanding of the role of collaborating agency directors and in distinguishing supervisory responsibilities.

School Connections

The FIT program is offered in four local elementary schools in the area. Inclusion of the other FRC services has gradually received acceptance as the Board of Education members have become more comfortable with the idea of school-based social services for families and their children. Since receiving funding in 1993, support for the FRC has increased among school principles and the school staff. Having an encouraging superintendent has been instrumental to the growth and acceptance of the FRC in Meriden.

During the first two years there have been several site changes both within schools and among schools because of space limitations. Despite these changes, a majority of participating parents have followed the program from place to place. Parents have been valuable during these changes by voicing their preferences for the FRC such as recommending that the cafeteria be used only when necessary and advocating reasons for moving the program to specific schools. For parents in Meriden, the greatest contribution of the FRC has been reducing barriers and preconceived notions about the schools and increasing school comfort levels for both parents and children.

Successes

- Increase in the number and diversity of people participating in programs
- Increase in support of the FRC by school principals and the superintendent
- Breaking down barriers and preconceived notions about schools

Challenges

- Strengthening the FRC and school relationship especially with teachers, social workers, and other support staff
- Involving parents to take a more active role in the FRC decision-making process
- Developing the other FRC model components more fully and effectively integrating these services for families and their children

Milford Family Resource Center, Milford, CT

Community Setting

Most services are provided at Pumpkin Delight Elementary School, a neighborhood elementary school serving approximately 375 students. Services are provided to families from each of the city's nine elementary schools. In addition, space is provided at the Egan Community Center for Adult Education classes. For parents enrolled in these classes, transportation and child care services are available and during school holidays, the FRC arranges family literacy activities at the Egan Center.

Milford does not have a large racial minority population. The city is more diverse socio-economically than racially, and has a relatively large number of working poor. At Pumpkin Delight, more than 10% of the students are eligible for free and reduced lunch; it is designated as a Title I school.

KidsCount, a community collaborative dedicated to the needs of young children and their families, incorporates the Milford FRC as part of its responsibilities. This group functions as both a Board of Directors and Advisory Committee for the FRC. Efforts are underway to recruit more parents and school personnel for the committee.

Integrated Services for Families & Children

The core services are provided to families and children through a variety of arrangements. The Families In Training (FIT) program and Adult Education are offered directly by the FRC. Linkages have been established with staff members at the Literacy Center of Milford for literacy education training. By sharing staff development, the FRC has obtained well-trained tutors and The Literacy Center has benefited from the expertise of the FRC staff. School Age Child Care and Family Child Care Provider Training are provided through interagency collaborations. Preschool Child Care, Positive Youth Development, and Resource and Referral are offered by referral.

The integration of services is seen as building trust between participants and collaborating agencies. As the FRC builds trusting relationships with family members, the trust is expanded to the partner agencies. As a result, family members are more likely to articulate other personal needs and families are more motivated to follow through with recommended resources and reach out to obtain the services they need.

A part-time director oversees staff training, develops programs, and coordinates services which meet the needs of individual children and their families. Other FRC staff members include parent educators, GED and ESL instructors, child care staff, a play group leader, a support group leader, and an administrative assistant. Two parent educators are supported by funds from a local foundation. More than 20 volunteers are involved with FRC programs. The staff works as a team and is committed to making sure that all voices are heard before decisions are made.

Collaboration

Formal and informal arrangements exist with agencies having a similar mission for families and having needs and resources compatible with the FRC. Formal collaborative arrangements have been established for the provision of Adult Education and with INFOLINE for Resource and Referral services. Milford's Adult Education program is a key partner and the FRC works closely with them to implement a program designed to meet the needs of FRC families, especially young parents, in terms of on-site child care, transportation, and individual support. A signed agreement is required for payment of services and clarification of roles.

Informal arrangements with other agencies reflect the FRC's supportive role and allows for mutually beneficial exchanges of services. For example, arrangements with the local YMCA provides scholarship opportunities for low income families to access services. Preschool Child Care is provided by private, state-subsidized, and home child care providers. An active network of child care providers offers support and training for local providers. The FRC's role has been to refer families to the network, facilitate provider training, and offer support and space for the activities of the Child Care Network.

School Connections

During the second year of program operation, FRC staff initiated several efforts to develop stronger connections with school personnel and programs for children within the school and their families. Programs such as the Homework Club, an after-school program with high school students serving as mentors, is co-sponsored by the FRC and the school.

FRC staff members have noticed that families have an improved attitude about school and have become active partners in their children's education. The school is seen as having an important function for themselves and their children. Over time, parents have reported that it becomes easier to walk down the hall of the school to the FRC. They feel less intimidated by the school environment. Parents see the FRC as a safe place to discuss personal needs and family issues with friendly and trusting FRC staff.

The attitude of the principal at Pumpkin Delight Elementary school has been influential in supporting the FRC and promoting the importance of the FRC services to the school. During the past year, the principal played an important role in keeping the FRC in its current location when discussions were focusing on the need for additional classroom space.

Successes

- Maintenance of effective collaborations with community agencies and school staff, and recognition of the FRC's importance and effectiveness in serving families
- Increased parent involvement and their ownership of the FRC
- Commitment of staff

Challenges

- Finding time to build relationships with school staff and the Board of Education
- Securing funding for program continuation and expansion
- Solving fiscal discrepancies between FRC practices and the FRC allocated budget

New London Family Resource Center, New London, CT

Community Setting

The FRC is located in the Smith-Bent Children's Center, a free-standing building that is one of the programs of the Child and Family Agency (C&FA) of Southeastern Connecticut. The FRC is school-linked rather than school-based, providing most of its services from the Smith-Bent Center rather than in the schools. C&FA provides health care in the schools through its school-based health centers. The FRC provides some support for the Positive Youth Development activities that are offered at these school-based health centers. Adult Education, a High Risk Infant Toddler Program, Preschool Child Care for three to five year-olds, and a Before and After Kindergarten Child Care program are all located in the Smith-Bent Center. Transportation to and from the local schools is provided by contract with another agency. Families In Training staff make visits to homes, but other aspects of the program, e.g., support groups and parenting workshops, take place at the Smith-Bent Center. Resource and Referral activities operate from Smith-Bent Center.

New London is a diverse community, with both a Navy base and several colleges. It is one of the poorer towns in Connecticut. Minorities, primarily Hispanic and African-American, make up almost a third of the population of 29,000. The FRC serves families with children in five elementary schools, one middle school, and a high school.

The Advisory Committee meets monthly and includes representatives from the school system, the Child and Family Agency, social service agencies in town, parents, and other community groups. The committee makes recommendations to the FRC staff, attends FRC events, and helps in the research, development, and marketing of programs.

Integrated Services for Families & Children

Because the services provided by the FRC at the Smith-Bent Center operate as a program within the C&FA, the fiscal agent for the FRC, staff do not make distinctions between the FRC and the C&FA. Families who participate in one program, e.g., an FRC workshop or home visitation program, may be eligible for participation in other programs offered, including the clinical services provided by the C&FA. A multi-disciplinary team knows all the programs well, stands in for each other when necessary, and uses a case management approach. Families become aware of other services when they participate in one program, usually, the High Risk Infant Toddler program or the other child care programs. They may reach out for help or information from staff members they come to trust in the program. The staff then helps the families identify their needs and make referrals to other staff or programs within C&FA and elsewhere in the community as appropriate.

The FRC has a large child care staff, including three full-time teachers, six teacher assistants, and six volunteers. The other full-time staff person is the administrator of the FRC. Three part-time community workers teach parenting, adult education, and other FRC programs. The multi-step hiring process that includes observation in the classroom, as well as interviews, assures that new staff members will work well with children, parents, and other personnel. Through this process and in-service training, the staff cultivates an environment in which parents feel comfortable talking about their problems or concerns. The entire staff meets monthly and staff members of individual programs meet weekly.

Collaboration

As providers of both space and personnel for the the New London FRC, the Child and Family Agency (C&FA) is the dominant partner in FRC activities. Collaboration among staff members is integral to the case management approach of the Smith-Bent Center and C&FA programs. Staff members know each others' programs well and their roles may frequently involve them in each others' programs. The FRC's collaboration with C&FA's school-based health centers for Positive Youth Development activities has served as the basis for expansion of its partnership with one school through the establishment of parent support groups and parent-child play groups on school grounds.

Collaboration with agencies outside C&FA is necessary for funding and staffing of Adult Education classes and Families In Training programming for Chapter I preschool parents. Adult Education and transportation services are contracted. The FRC has an agreement to refer providers to another agency in town that offers child care provider training.

School Connections

Because the FRC is school-linked rather than school-based, its initial involvement with the schools was through collaboration with the school-based health centers and as a recipient of referrals from school staff. The FRC does not provide all services to all schools in the community, but any family who enrolls in the FRC is connected to all appropriate FRC services and then connected to their neighborhood schools through the FRC. Not being located in the schools, the FRC staff has found it necessary to initiate and develop relationships with school personnel, looking for shared interests and opportunities to collaborate. Recent results of these efforts have been the addition of parent support and play groups at one school, and C&FA in-service training for school staff to integrate children coming from preschools into kindergarten.

Successes

- Establishing several programs in the local schools that improve the early childhood services provided by those schools
- Use of case management approach to ensure that agencies communicate with each other and follow through in meeting the needs of families
- Developing a high quality staff skilled in its interactions with families and children, and producing high quality programs that are accredited by the CWLA Council On Accreditation and in the process of achieving NAEYC accreditation

Challenges

- Reducing local agency territoriality that limits opportunities for collaboration
- Increasing the linkages with local schools when not located in the schools or involved in school planning and operation
- Providing comprehensive and quality services to families when the FRC model components are so divergent, e.g., child care and technical assistance, or positive youth development and home visiting

North Branford Family Resource Center, North Branford, CT

Community Setting

The FRC has received funding since March, 1989 and is one of the three original school-based FRCs in Connecticut. FRC services are provided in three different locations. Preschool Child Care is provided at the North Branford High School, the Families in Training program is offered at the Jerome Harrison Elementary School, and School Age Child Care is available at the Totoket Valley Elementary School. Other FRC services are offered from these locations. Transportation for many of the children enrolled in Preschool and School Age Child Care services is incorporated in the general school bus routes.

North Branford is a growing suburb outside of New Haven with a population of approximately 13,500. The town is predominately a white, blue-collar community with a high percentage of Italian-American families. Few social services are available.

At present the FRC does not have an advisory committee. Discussions have focused on creating an advisory committee composed of parents, community residents, and school staff to help build a broad base of support for FRC programs and funding.

Integrated Services for Families & Children

For most families, the first contact with the FRC is through participation with the Families In Training program; then they become involved with the Preschool Child Care and School Age Child Care programs. These three programs serve as primary points of entry to other services offered by the FRC. Parent education is incorporated in the programming at each location and occurs on an ongoing basis through parent meetings, newsletters, and parent-teacher conferences. Involvement in outdoor experience programs has been a successful Positive Youth Development activity. Over the years, outdoor experience programs have involved sixth graders as well as high school students. Also, peer advocacy groups have been developed and implemented for both high school and intermediate school students. Adult Education is offered by referral and the FRC provides child care reimbursement and course fee reimbursement on a sliding scale.

Staff members include the program administrator, part-time administrative assistant, three parent educators, and several teaching staff positions. Daily communication among staff members is maintained by the administrator and staff meetings are held when necessary. The administrator acts as an advisor to the program staff as they develop and implement programs in response to the needs of families.

Collaboration

Most collaborative arrangements are based on informal mutual agreements. FRC staff primarily work with school professionals. However, over the years many associations have developed with people and resources in the area. Formal arrangements are used when professionals outside the school system are hired for specific purposes.

School Connections

By having FRC programs in three different schools, the FRC staff works with school personnel in a variety of capacities. For example, the school social worker has served as consultant for families and children in the preschool program. The FRC also augments school services, such as yearly screening of young children. As a result, early identification of children with special needs helps parents become more aware of various issues and resources and helps school staff arrange for placements in the classroom. The FRC is involved with other school programs providing services for children ages three to five with special needs.

Community inclusion and acceptance of the FRC is reflected by the availability of services in several school locations. Having programs located in the schools, the parents view the programs as accessible. They feel comfortable seeking the resources they need and using the available FRC services.

Successes

- Commitment of FRC staff and supportive school staff
- Quality programming
- Implementation of School Age Child Care Program

Challenges

- Obtaining accreditation for existing programs
- Generating effective Positive Youth Development and teen pregnancy prevention programs
- Increasing collaborative involvement with existing school programs

North Hartford Family Resource Center, Hartford, CT

Community

The FRC is located in several centrally-located converted classrooms in a large former high school that houses the Martin Luther King, Jr. Elementary School (MLK School) and Fox Middle School. Most programs of the FRC, including School Age Child Care, Adult Education, Families In Training, Positive Youth Development, and Resource and Referral take place during the school year and summer in these rooms and in other school space as it is available. Some Preschool Child Care is available at MLK School and additional child care is provided through collaboration with another agency. Family Child Care Provider Training is offered off site, through collaborative arrangements.

The FRC serves an urban lower income and working-class population in the Upper Albany and Blue Hills neighborhoods of Hartford. Seventy-to-eighty percent of the families in the immediate neighborhoods are from the West Indies, primarily Jamaica. The community is long-established and not very mobile which provides some foundation for local efforts to cope with the socioeconomic problems typical of northeastern urban areas.

The Advisory Board is composed of parents, representatives from MLK School, the Village for Families and Children, Inc., other social service agencies, and the community. The group has officers and meets monthly. They have received training and technical assistance in strategic planning and group dynamics. They carry out research on program needs of the community and advise and monitor planning and implementation of FRC programs, activities, and events, including fundraisers. The board always consists of people representing two levels of experience: those who are trained, committed, and regular participants; and those who are newer, need training and leadership skills, and who will eventually become part of the other, more experienced group. This apprenticeship approach keeps participation on the board active and vital.

Integrated Services for Families & Children

The FRC is an active place where school children and parents drop in to find out what activities are going on, meet other people and attend meetings, and interact with staff members. This flow of activity and "home-like" environment encourages informal networking and sharing of information about the variety of services available through the FRC and its partners. Families who enroll in one program are encouraged to enroll in other FRC programs and to become involved as volunteers or work for the programs as staff members or on the Advisory Board. By continuously cross-training and involving new parents in the management of the FRC, knowledge is shared, responsibilities are delegated, and families are more likely to become engaged in the full range of opportunities available to them. Staff members facilitate this community development approach by operating as a team to identify needs of parents and children, and to invite parents to participate in FRC programs or investigate other options that staff can arrange through referral elsewhere in the community. Families are treated as consumers in need of services which they help to define through their active involvement in running the FRC.

The FRC has a full-time administrator, program coordinator, parent educator, and clerk. Other paid part-time positions include a job developer, tutors, and adult education teachers. Parents and teenagers volunteer to help with administration, Adult Education, Parents As Teachers, School Age Child Care, and Positive Youth Development programs. Staff members are supported in their efforts to increase their own skills, grow in their positions, and achieve personal goals. They are encouraged to see

themselves not as experts but as partners with the people they serve.

Collaboration

By constantly being attuned to the specific program needs of the families it serves, the FRC is able to negotiate with partners who want to provide financial or in-kind support to the FRC. The staff makes it clear to potential partners that the FRC's Advisory Board will decide how any money they contribute will be spent. The FRC is marketed to the community, using advertising and public relations strategies to show the community what the FRC is doing and to encourage this type of financial support.

The FRC has formal collaborative arrangements with several agencies. The Village for Families and Children, Inc. is the FRC's fiscal agent; it provides mental health and support services to families referred to it by FRC staff members and program guidance through participation on the Advisory Board. The City of Hartford operates a Preschool Child Care center for FRC families and the Hartford Board of Education operates a School Age and Summer Child Care program. The Urban League provides adult education and job/career development; the University of Hartford has worked with the FRC to offer its "Head Start on Science" project to families. On a less formal basis, other agencies provide volunteers and interns, technical assistance, funding, and in-kind resources to special projects and programs.

School Connections

The FRC evolved out of a plan developed by the teachers and administrators of the MLK School to attract parents into the school and to offer opportunities to children and families not provided elsewhere in the community. Children who register in the school also register with the FRC. Teachers and the administrative staff are the major sources of referrals to the FRC, and they and FRC staff members regularly meet and confer with each other. The school staff sees the FRC as a place that can manage the non-academic issues that distract them from the academic work. The school staff continues to be actively involved in the FRC through the Advisory Board, and the FRC staff participates in the school's governance team.

Successes

- Active participation and leadership in all aspects of the FRC by parents, many previously uninvolved in any school-related activity
- Evidence of reduced numbers of suspensions and truancies, and improved grades among school children
- Rapid and successful implementation of programs and services provided to children and families, prompting the funding (through non-governmental sources) of three additional FRCs in the city

Challenges

- Finding partners who are willing to allow the FRC to determine how the partners' funds should be spent, with the funds spent on serving needs identified by parents instead of serving needs identified by the funding agency
- Managing and accommodating the bureaucratic and political needs of the FRC's partners, particularly the school system
- Changes in personnel in the school and in the FRC

Norwich Family Resource Center, Norwich, CT

Community Setting

The FRC has been funded since 1994 and is located in the Wequonnoc Elementary School in Taftville, one of the small towns in the Norwich School District. The FRC program administrator occupies a small room (previously a girls' locker room) adjacent to the gym/cafeteria. This space is also used by the gym teachers on Mondays and Fridays. FRC Preschool Child Care services share a room part of the school day with the Norwich Public Schools' preschool program. School Age Child Care and Positive Youth Development (PYD) services are also provided on site, using existing classroom and gym/cafeteria space with pre-existing youth programs. The FRC program often moves from room to room as space conflicts arise. Adult Education services are offered on site for parents of Wequonnoc School students. Currently there is no space in the school during the day for an adult education program. Therefore, classes are held two evenings per week. Families in Training (FIT) playgroups take place in the school ten times a year. Parents are visited monthly at home. FRC staff members provide area agencies with support and training for child care providers. These are offered free and on site. INFOLINE is used to supplement the Resource and Referral services provided by the FRC program administrator.

Taftville was a blue-collar mill town and now has a high rate of unemployed families. A few families speak Spanish. There is reported drug abuse and a high rate of crime. There are 300 children in the Wequonnoc School and 71% are eligible for free or reduced price breakfast and lunch. Most children and families live within walking distance to school. Because of the difficulties in the neighborhood, families are suspicious of outside agencies. Many families have refused home visits as part of the FIT service.

There are currently 31 members on the Advisory Committee. It is made up of FRC staff, school staff, collaborators, and parents of Wequonnoc School children. The committee meets quarterly. The FRC program administrator intends to use more notices and make more telephone calls to increase attendance at the meetings.

Integrated Services for Families & Children

Due to limited space, the Norwich FRC focuses on School Age Child Care and PYD services. Preference is given to children whose parents work or attend classes. These FRC services supplement, not duplicate, what is already going on for children in the school. Comprehensive Adult Education services are already offered in four locations in Norwich. GED and Pre-GED classes are offered on site. FRC staff provide FIT services to a small group of families. The staff coordinates efforts with Head Start and a program which serves developmentally delayed children. By using existing services for several of the FRC services, the FRC staff is able to offer families more services with limited funding.

The FRC employed two preschool teachers and aides when preschool services were offered on site in the 1994-95 and 1995-96 school years. A parent educator, two GED teachers, a PYD/School Age Child Care teacher, and an aide are currently on the FRC staff. All FRC staff members are part-time. The Norwich Adult Education Program funds the FRC Administrator. The FRC staff members have to be independent workers and the administrator indicates all have experience in childhood development. They try to meet twice monthly to plan, but find it difficult sometimes because of their part-time schedules.

Collaboration

The FRC collaborates with many local community agencies to provide the core FRC services. In 1994, the FRC built on existing programs to offer the core services to families. Examples of collaborations include the Norwich Public Schools System (Norwich Board of Education) which provides space, utilities, custodial and nursing services, and food service; and Head Start which provides weekly home visits to FRC families with preschool children. FRC children with developmental delays go to the Birth to Three Service Coordination Center. The Norwich Adult Education Administrator supervises the FRC staff and the FRC administrator is paid by the Adult Education Program. Norwich Recreation Department supplements summer recreation activities, and the Norwich FRC is collaborating with the New London FRC to survey staff development needs of local family child care providers. The University of Connecticut Cooperative Extension Service has been very supportive to the PYD program and has written curriculum and provided funds and some staff development for a outdoor "Trails" program for FRC children. The City of Norwich Youth and Family Services program also has provided some funding for this program. The senior citizen residents of Wequonnoc Village spend time with the FRC School Age Child Care/PYD participants twice a month at their apartment complex to provide an intergenerational experience.

School Connections

The FRC is supported by the superintendent, school principal, and director of adult education. The principal has been at Wequonnoc School for 34 years. He knows the families well and supports early childhood programs. He is the early childhood advisor for Norwich Public Schools. Teachers are possessive of their space and the FRC staff has found it difficult to find space in the school for programs at certain times of the day. However, as teachers have learned how the FRC After School Home-work Club supports teaching and learning, they have become more friendly. One strategy has been to meet with teachers one-on-one to discuss how the FRC can assist them.

Most families live within walking distance of the school and find the FRC activities easy to get to. Norwich has very little public transportation so parents would find it difficult to access services elsewhere. School notes taken home by the children are easy vehicles for parents to find out about FRC activities.

Successes

- Providing an incentive (e.g., child care) for parents to find work or go back to school
- Improving collaborations with community resources
- Improving parenting skills of parents in FIT program

Challenges

- Funding
- Sharing space with the school staff
- Getting parents involved on an ongoing basis

Rogers School Family Resource Center, Stamford, CT

Community Setting

The Rogers School Family Resource Center is located in the Rogers Magnet School. The Rogers School Community Center Organization (ROSCCO), also located in the Rogers Magnet School, is the grantee for the FRC. ROSCCO, a non-profit organization established in 1975, provides educational, recreational, enrichment, and cultural activities in 11 elementary schools in Stamford. The Rogers Magnet School is a K-5 school serving 800 children. Many of the FRC services take place in the large school building. Space has been generously allocated for FRC activities as the program has expanded. Outreach services, e.g., Families in Training (FIT) and Family Child Care Provider Trainings, may also be provided in participant homes.

The FRC serves the Rogers Magnet School catchment area. The neighborhood has primarily African American, Hispanic, Haitian and Eastern European families with more than 15 languages spoken among the student body. More than 50% of the students are eligible for Title I services. Most students walk to school. Magnet status and bussing result in an exchange of 20% of the students. However, the FRC serves all students in the immediate neighborhood and those bussed. The Rogers Magnet School received an award in the spring of 1996 as a "School of the 21st Century," identifying it as a true community school working towards improved student achievement through effective school/family/community collaboration.

The FRC Advisory Committee meets once monthly at 5 p.m., which is the best time for working parents to meet. Its purpose is to provide support for the FRC program model from the Stamford Public School Board and the Stamford community. Membership on the FRC Advisory is broad-based, consisting of representatives from education (e.g., principal, school board), parents from the PTO, collaborators (e.g. Child Care Center of Stamford, Stamford Counseling, United Way), ROSCCO, and FRC staff members.

Integrated Services for Families & Children

ROSCCO has been serving families for more than 20 years. Families see ROSCCO and FRC services as a seamless system to choose from to meet their needs. The blending of services has been a goal of the staff to facilitate access to services and increase the number of families served. The FRC provides funds for preschool child care in the school building (extended-day and full-year care) which is operated by the Child Care Center of Stamford. ROSCCO, in agreement with the Stamford Public Schools, offers School Age Child Care. The FRC Adult Education services are offered at the school free of charge. The staff of the Stamford Adult and Continuing Education is responsible for the teaching and materials. Because of this location, parents have child care provided which improves attendance. FRC staff members help to recruit parents for the education classes and coordinate other support services to achieve self-sufficiency.

The Families in Training (FIT) and Positive Youth Development (PYD) services are provided through collaborative arrangements. The FRC program staff works with the PYD program (Teen Pregnancy Prevention Program) coordinator to identify services for the pre-teen target population students (fifth graders). The FIT program, partially funded by the United Way of Stamford, is a joint effort to provide parenting classes and home visits to parents with diverse backgrounds and work schedules. Family Child Care Provider Training is provided by a four agency partnership with Save the Children spearheading the effort by designing

outreach services and in-home visits identified from a needs assessment.

The FRC's Resource and Referral is a good example of how the spirit of cooperation results in comprehensive family support services. Staff members from ROSCCO and the Rogers Magnet School administration assist the FRC program staff in telling families about community resources. This results in minimizing parents' frustrations when seeking services for themselves or their children.

The FRC staff includes the program director, program administrator, Resource and Referral coordinator, and staff support for FIT and PYD programs.

Collaboration

The Stamford FRC is built on a foundation of collaboration. With ROSCCO as the grantee, the FRC services are designed to build from the strong base of services (administrative and direct) provided by ROSCCO which minimizes costs. The directors of ROSCCO and the FRC, together with the school principal, act as a team. They have developed a shared vision of the school as more than an educational resource, but a resource for the entire community which results in improved student success.

School Connections

The Rogers Magnet School and ROSCCO both see the value of the school setting as a critical connection for the FRC to support student success. Being administered by ROSCCO rather than directly by the School District has given FRC staff the flexibility to obtain additional resources, collaborate with outside agencies, and focus on parents' needs as well as the needs of their children. The FRC becomes that link between the school environment and the outside agencies for children and parents. The Rogers Magnet School is the "hub" of the neighborhood it serves. There is a strong community culture in the school as illustrated by the participation in FRC and ROSCCO activities and the long hours the school building is opened.

Successes

- Received the award of a "School of the 21st Century" from the Yale Bush Center
- Improved transitions for students into the middle school
- Continued growth in collaborations with other agencies

Challenges

- Additional funding to support programming
- Growth in the demand for child care
- More space for adult education

West Hartford Family Resource Center, West Hartford, CT

Community Setting

The FRC in West Hartford is located at the Charter Oak School, a K-5 elementary school. Centrally located on the ground floor of the school, the FRC is housed in a large space with direct access to the outside making it easy for parents with strollers to enter the center. Coffee is always available and children can play while parents participate in programs. Most FRC activities take place in this room: administration and staff meetings, Families in Training play and support groups, Family Child Care Provider Training groups and support, Positive Youth Development mini-courses for children, and Resource and Referral services. Some parents receive ESL and parent education programs in the FRC room; GED students are referred to classes in town. The school auditorium, library, and other classrooms provide additional space for tutoring, part-time Preschool Child Care, and School Age Child Care. Because the FRC serves only those families whose children attend the Charter Oak School and live in the immediate neighborhood, additional transportation has not been needed.

The neighborhood served by the FRC in West Hartford is about one square mile bordering Hartford. The community is primarily a lower middle-class community with about 40% of the student population from minority groups, including a growing population of Spanish-speaking families. About 38% of the students are on reduced or free lunches.

The FRC Advisory Committee consists of school staff, parents, home child care providers, and other community members. These people meet monthly to guide FRC staff members and act as a "sounding board" for ideas. Their skills and interests are used to build community and school support for the FRC through public relations, fundraising, and grant-writing activities.

Integrated Services for Families & Children

The school staff and FRC staff at Charter Oak School make no distinction between the FRC and the rest of the school. The school sees itself as a community center serving the educational, mental, and emotional needs of students and their families who live in the neighborhood. The FRC is the component of the school that provides programs and activities targeted at families, complementing the educational and counseling services traditionally provided by the school. FRC staff and school staff members see their jobs as supporting each other, and consequently, parents and students do not distinguish between the FRC and the school.

Potentially, families can access a continuum of programs that serve the needs of both parents and children from birth to adulthood. Parents with young children receive home visits and parent education and participate in support groups. With their children, they participate in playgroups and special programs. Some preschool children receive part-time child care on site, others are referred to programs elsewhere. School-age children can participate in the FRC through School Age Child Care; Positive Youth Development activities such as mini-courses, a Homework Center, Study Buddies, and a Lunch Club; and summer programs. Parents can receive training in first-aid, CPR, parenting skills, or ESL.

Paid full-time staff members include the FRC coordinator, parent educator, Positive Youth counselor, and family therapist. An administrative assistant and Spanish-speaking family therapist work part-time. Because the FRC is a partnership between the Charter Oak School and The Bridge, a private non-profit family services agency, FRC staff members are considered staff members of both The Bridge and Charter Oak School. Regular meetings among the FRC staff, the school staff, and the Bridge staff act to

integrate the programs into the school and manage problems among the three groups. The coordinator is the only staff person active in all the programs but all FRC staff members can respond to a family needing services by providing information, appropriate referrals, and follow-up.

Collaboration

The Charter Oak FRC exists because of the collaboration between The Bridge, which acts as fiscal agent and pays all the staff salaries in the FRC, and the Charter Oak School, which provides space, utilities, and the student/family clientele. The relationship is informal, relying on meetings and the quality of interpersonal relationships to maintain it. The FRC, school, and Bridge staffs operate as a team to determine programs appropriate to the needs of the school as a whole and to the specific children and families they serve. Turf problems between partners are kept to a minimum by keeping communication channels active. Similarly, informal agreements with WHEE, the West Hartford Extended Experience, provide FRC families on-site Preschool and School Age Child Care with the FRC subsidizing the cost of care for FRC-referred families. Other informal agreements allow for referrals or solicitations for specific services with agencies and organizations all over town: health clinics, transportation, eyeglasses. A network of personal contacts among the FRC, merchants, and other organizations help fill in the gaps when an unexpected need arises.

School Connections

Because of the strong collaboration that developed early between the school principal and personnel at The Bridge and the FRC, the FRC has been able to grow quickly and comparatively easily in Charter Oak School. With fiscal responsibilities in the hands of The Bridge rather than a school board, the principal has been free to be an advocate of the FRC and to incorporate it into the school in whatever ways thought to be advantageous to students. The FRC manages non-academic problems and provides services not possible in the school before. Parents' suspicion of schools has been easier to overcome because of this close relationship between the school and the FRC.

Successes

- Designated as a School for the 21st Century national model demonstration site
- Growth in programs and participation, especially mini-courses which attract over one hundred children each time offered
- During a time of shrinking public dollars, the FRC has expanded its services and programs by opening a foundation-funded second site at another school

Challenges

- Finding local funding for FRC programs and operation
- Increasing participation by minority parents in programs
- Finding ways to expand the FRC into other schools in West Hartford

Wexler Family Resource Center, New Haven, CT

Community Setting

The Wexler Family Resource Center (FRC) initially received funding in 1994 and is located at the Isadore Wexler Community School. The FRC administrative office is in a converted classroom and has the use of two other rooms in the school for its parent-child activities. The administrative office also serves as parent meeting room, interview room, playgroup area, and drop in area for children; it is effective as a welcoming, accessible resource room for parents and children. Many FRC core services are provided through referral to collaborators and take place off site (e.g., adult education services in the Dixwell Community House, preschool child care at existing local agencies, Positive Youth Development at Dixwell "Q" House). The Wexler Community School is located next to Dixwell "Q" House (community educational and cultural center) and both work together to establish a sense of community support for the families in the Dixwell neighborhood.

The Dixwell neighborhood is New Haven's oldest African American neighborhood. The Elm Haven Housing Project located near the Wexler Community School used to be safe, working-class residential housing, but the residents' strong sense of community is being eroded by problems of economic, cultural, and social deprivation. Currently, there is a high incidence of crime, drugs, babies with low birth weight, and teenage pregnancy. In the Wexler School, 69% of the students receive free and reduced lunch and only 70% of the Wexler students finish school. A recently funded $50 million dollar federal project is planned to revitalize the neighborhood. The Isadore Wexler Community School was chosen to house the FRC because the school is the most familiar and easily accessible institution in this neighborhood.

The Advisory Board consists of representatives from some of the community-based organizations, Elm Haven Tenants Council, the Board of Education, and parents. The Advisory Board seeks to work with every entity in the community to collaborate, not duplicate efforts. The Advisory Board is a working committee. Each member has taken responsibility for a component of the FRC to understand its scope and purpose and to build support through expanded funding and public awareness.

Integrated Services for Families & Children

Wexler FRC services are family-focused. Activities and program topics are generated by parents. Parents help facilitate workshops by receiving training to become trainers and then providing other parents with information. This strategy improves the parents' ownership of the FRC and serves as an easy recruiting method. The FRC staff focuses its energy on Resource and Referral, Families in Training (e.g., home visits, playgroups, parenting classes), and School Age Child Care programs for children which all take place at the Wexler Community School. Examples of the programs for school age children include Breakfast of Champions Computer Program, Preschool Buddies, and the Pride Center. The FRC staff contacts families frequently to follow up on referrals and access other services required to support their children and themselves. Parents don't see the FRC services as separate services, but rather use the FRC as a resource where someone can always "get something started" to meet their needs and interests. Because of existing services in the community, there is easy referral for preschool child care, adult education, numerous after school programs, and support and training for child care providers.

The philosophy at the FRC is that "children are our most important commodity" and every resource must be tapped to support the FRC families. Staff members are extremely skilled in working with the families from the Dixwell neighborhood. Due to limited funding, the center staff includes the program administrator,

parent educator, and administrative assistant. Some funding is reserved to pay outside professionals when necessary.

Collaboration

Many public and private agencies serve and support families in the Dixwell neighborhood. Several of the FRC core services are provided through collaborative efforts with these agencies. The key factor of successful collaboration is to bring "all the stakeholders to the table at the same time." An example is the CNA training initially provided by the FRC. When it became difficult to fund this program the FRC demonstrated its demand and success with parents. As a result, the New Haven Adult Education program has incorporated the program with its pre-GED/ GED programs at the Dixwell Community House.

The Advisory Board and FRC staff are aware of every community resource and have agreed to utilize existing services whenever possible. Collaborating agencies include LEAP, Elm Haven Youth Division, Yale Child Study Center, Hill Health Corporation, INFOLINE, New Haven Adult Education, and Elm Haven Tenant Council.

School Connections

Because the FRC is at the school, parents and students are able to drop in throughout the day. The FRC staff makes the phones available for local calls. Parents are often in school because of their children's behavior problems and come to the FRC for advice and support. The FRC staff has an excellent rapport with the principal and school staff members. FRC staff members attend school staff meetings and are part of the school improvement team. Teachers often come to the FRC to talk about a child or family. The school staff sees the Wexler FRC as "their center."

Successes

- Twenty-one employed parents
- Community stakeholders coming together to collaborate for improved services for neighborhood
- More parents taking an active role in the school

Challenges

- Funding for expanded services to our children and families
- Attending staff development training and conferences
- Stronger focus on teenage pregnancy and drop out prevention

Windham Family Resource Center, Windham, CT

Community Setting

The FRC is located in a building with the Windham Even Start program, a bilingual and English preschool (including special needs), and other school support (migrant and adult education) personnel. This site provides good administrative space for the FRC, shared meeting space for the staff, and opportunities to link with other professionals in the building. Windham is a community with a strong social service referral/resource network. A consortium of community agencies collaborated to apply for the grant supporting the FRC. The center was designed to collaborate with existing services to build the core FRC components. Through the Resource and Referral Services, the FRC is closely linked with community resources that are available. For example, early childhood services are too costly to maintain and coordinate so parents are referred to existing programs.

Windham has a population of approximately 25,000. A large proportion of residents works as professionals associated with the University of Connecticut and another large segment of the population consists of unemployed workers. Between 25% and 40% receive AFDC benefits. The school system supports about 3500 students; Spanish is the primary language for about 40% of the students. All four elementary schools in the community qualify for Title I support.

The FRC Advisory Committee consists of about 30 people including the welfare director, representatives from various social services, parents, and staff members from the University of Connecticut and other post-secondary schools. Meetings are held every two or three months to address issues concerning service delivery and program design. Committee members are active in their support for the FRC such as working together to negotiate the provision of transportation to the FRC area and engaging in letter writing campaigns to support the FRC when state funding was threatened.

Integrated Services for Families & Children

Windham's FRC and Even Start programs provide a continuum of coordinated early childhood and family support services. The FRC administers the Families in Training (FIT) program and Resource and Referral services directly on site. Windham's Even Start program provides families with integrated adult education, parenting, and early childhood services. The integration of adult education services, parenting education, and on-site child care is an example of integrated services for families and their children. Also, the transition of families from the FIT program to adult education and preschool child care is another example of services working together and encouraging families to remain part of the FRC system. By having access to many services in one location, families are given the support they need to navigate the system of social agencies. Once they understand that someone cares, they are more likely to reach out on their own for the services they need.

Stipends for child care services are provided by the FRC to working parents or parents enrolled in school. Adult Education classes are provided on site by the FRC and Even Start through Windham Adult Education on site and in coordination with local post-secondary schools and programs. Positive Youth Development (PYD) activities and Family Child Care Provider Training are supported through interagency collaborations with the FRC augmenting existing activities.

All the FRC staff members are employed part-time. The staff includes an administrator, administrative assistant, FIT educator, adult education teacher, PYD instructor, and several

ERIC ST COPY AVAILABLE

volunteers. Most of the paid staff members also work part-time with other school department programs or community based organizations working collaboratively with the FRC. FRC staff members therefore are more likely to have contact with families in different contexts. For example, the administrator works part-time with the FRC and part-time with the school district's Migratory Program.

Collaboration

Cooperation among service providers exists with the FRC and Even Start programs. All agencies work together to provide beneficial services to families and to avoid risk of overlapping or duplication of services. Both formal and informal arrangements are used to provide services. Formal cooperative agreements have been established for the provision of Adult Education, Family Child Care Provider Training, and PYD activities. These agreements improve communication with agencies and clearly stipulate the services to be provided. One example of successful collaboration is the inclusion of the FRC in the Windham Youth Services budget to provide work stipends for PYD activities. Informal collaborative arrangements are most likely to occur with agencies providing core services in the same location as the FRC. Informal arrangements also exist with INFOLINE for the provision of Resource and Referral services.

School Connections

The FRC staff needs to travel to the schools to communicate with school staff. Although the FRC is not located in a school, the FRC receives strong support from school administrators and the school board. In-kind contributions from the Windham School District include space, utilities, and professional development for the staff. Publicity about FRC programs also is circulated throughout the schools.

Home visiting opportunities are used to link parents to schools. Transportation for parents to the school is facilitated by the FRC as a way of encouraging their involvement in the school. School staff members have commented that more parents have taken the time to answer notes and/or return phone calls from teachers. Parents often seek the assistance of the FRC staff members to compose their letters. Currently, the FRC staff is working with local parent/teacher organizations to develop strategies for increasing parent involvement.

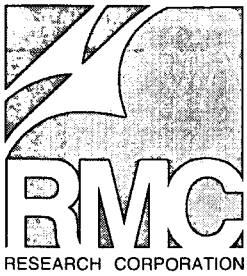
Successes

- Increased publicity for all types of FRC activities
- Increased involvement of families in FRC activities along with their support and encouragement
- Good collaboration with social service agencies

Challenges

- Ongoing communication with the schools about the role of the FRC and the concerns of parents
- Serving more families in need with reduced funding
- Expanding participation of parents and children

RESEARCH CORPORATION



Final Report

Outside Evaluation of Connecticut's Family Resource Centers

Volume II

RMC Research Corporation
1000 Market Street
Portsmouth, New Hampshire 03801

February 1997

ES 026989

ERIC

Final Report

Outside Evaluation of Connecticut's Family Resource Centers

Volume II

Prepared for:
The Connecticut State Department of Education

Written by:
Susan Frankel, Ph.D.
Cynthia Harvell, M.S.W.
Barbara Wauchope, Ph.D.

With the Assistance of:
Sharon Beckstrom, Ed.D.
Clifford J. Cox, Ph.D.
Mary Heath, M.Ed.

RMC Research Corporation
1000 Market Street
Portsmouth, NH 03801

February 1997

Contents

Appendices

A. Evaluation Support System (ESS)
B. Family Resource Center Funding and Budget Survey
C. Family Resource Center Staffing Survey
D. Family Resource Center Participation Survey
E. Family Resource Center Profile Survey
F. Family Resource Center School Staff Survey
G. Family Resource Center Administrator Interview
H. Stakeholder Interview Questions and List of Stakeholders Interviewed
I. Family Resource Center Focus Group Protocols and Principals' Survey

Appendices

A. Evaluation Support System (ESS)

Evaluation Support System (ESS)

Purpose: To collect enrollment and participation data for families using the Family Resource Center services.

Design: This data gathering system consisted of two major components. The first was a set of forms to assist in tracking enrollment, participation counts, and level of intensity of services to Family Resource Center families in a consistent fashion across all the FRC sites. The second was a microcomputer-based relational database which allowed the centers to enter enrollment and participation data on site.

The ESS was designed to provide a generic system through which all the FRCs could collect the same enrollment and participation data in the same format. The data were aggregated to provide an estimate of the total of hours of service provided in each core service area by each FRC as well as the number of people and families that enrolled and received services from an FRC. The data also allowed RMC to develop a profile of the types of services and intensity of services participating families received.

Method: The ESS enrollment/participation forms were designed iteratively with the FRC administrators throughout the first six months of RMC's evaluation contract. A large portion of the administrators' retreat in November, 1994 was devoted to defining what information should be included. As a result of this discussion a set of draft forms was prepared. These forms were revised over the next two months and the final versions were completed and distributed to the FRCs in January, 1995. All of the centers began using the forms to track family enrollments and service participation beginning in January, 1995.

The ESS software was designed between January and February, 1995 and was distributed at the February, 1995 FRC administrators meeting. Administrators were asked to begin entering data immediately. Two training session were held in April, 1995 at which time administrators and their staff were given hands-on experience using the ESS software and provided time for questions.

Several additional versions of the system have been made to remove bugs and include an on-line help system to aid data entry staff learning to use the ESS software. Additional training sessions were held on October, 1995 as refreshers and to discuss writing reports with the ad-hoc report generator.

Each FRC was asked to track enrollment and participation information from July 1, 1995 through June 30, 1996. Data diskettes were mailed to RMC, where the data were aggregated to construct a picture of the quantity of service provided by the centers as well as the typical profile of service use.

The data gathered from the centers underestimate the amount of services provided by the Family Resource centers. In general, most data collection efforts about human behavior and activities underestimate the phenomena being studied. Families do not like to fill out forms when enrolling for simple services, participants are reluctant to give personal information such as income, and staff do not want to appear as "watchdogs" and consequently are reluctant to gather information.

Another set of reasons to believe the data underestimate the amount of services provided pertain to the lack of staff support and technical assistance for data collection efforts. Some centers were not able to build the infrastructure to gather the data. Other sites did not have enough staff to complete all the data or to enter the information consistently into the system. Staff turnover also led to inconsistent data entry. For other sites, computer problems hampered data collection activities. Furthermore, data diskettes from a few sites showed gaps in the participation data. Yet, it is known from other data gathering sources that services were provided by those sites during this time period.

Data were analyzed using the microcomputer based version of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).

FRC FAMILY ENROLLMENT FORM

Date:_____

(Complete for all Household Members by staff -- Must obtain birth date for primary family contact)

Staff:_____

A. FAMILY PROFILE Name (First/Last) (** Primary Contact - Need DOB)	Sex (M) (F)	Primary Language	Relation-ship	Birth Date (Age)	Ethnicity	School or Employer	Last Grade Complete	Services CC / PYD AE / FIT
1**								
2								
3								
4								
5								
6								
7								
8								

B. Address: Street: _____ Town: _____ State:_____ Zip:_____

C. Phone: Day: _____ Evening: _____

D. Language Used Most in Home: ☐ English ☐ Spanish ☐ Other (specify) _____

E. Family Ethnicity: ☐ Asian/Pacific Islander ☐ American Indian/Alaska Native ☐ Hispanic ☐ African American ☐ White ☐ Other_____

F. Household Annual Income Range: ☐ Below $20,000 ☐ $20,000 - $30,000 ☐ $30,001 - $40,000 ☐ $40,001 - $50,000 ☐ $50,001 - $60,000 ☐ Over $60,000
(Gross Annual Income of All Family Members)

G. How did you hear about the FRC? ☐ Newspaper ☐ Friend/ Neighbor ☐ Referred by State Agency ☐ Called for info-referral
(Check ALL that Apply) ☐ School publicity ☐ Relative ☐ Referred by child care provider ☐ Other _____

H. Have you previously been enrolled in an FRC program? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't Know (If Yes: What Last Name _____)

I. Why did you call today? _____
(Place Comments on Back of Page)

Date Enrolled: _____ Date Exited:_____ Director:_____

FAMID#:_____ (E.G. Bob Smith - Born 11/14/65 = 11SHB651401) (1/95)

(FAMID#= Primary Contact: MO of Birth / First and Last Letters of Last Name / First Letter of First Name / YR of Birth / DAY of Birth / Duplicate Counter)

FRC PRESCHOOL/SCHOOLAGE CHILD CARE ENROLLMENT FORM

(Completed by Staff)

Date: _____

Staff: _____

A. Is your family enrolled in the FRC?

- ☐ Yes ➜ (GoTo B)
- ☐ No ➜ (ENROLL FAMILY and GoTo C)
- ☐ Don't Know ➜ (ENROLL FAMILY - Must Check for Duplicate Enrollment)

B. Are you the Family Contact? ☐ Yes (Goto C) ☐ NO --> First/Last Name: _____ Phone: _____

Street: _____ Town: _____ ST: _____ ZIP: _____

C. FAMILY CONTACT: First Name/Last Name	FamID# or Birth Date

(FAMID#= Contact Persons: MO of Birth / First and Last Letters of Last Name / First Letter of First Name / YR of Birth / DAY of Birth / Duplicate Counter)

D. CHILD: First/Last Name	Grade	School	Teacher

E. SCHOOL TYPE	Wait List	Enroll Date	Exit Date	Day/Time	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun
Preschool				Arrive Time							
				Depart Time							
School Age Before School				Arrive Time							
				Depart Time							
School Age After School				Arrive Time							
				Depart Time							

156

157

Total Hours Weekly: _____ Hours Site: _____ Collaborator: _____

F. Permissions/Releases:

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

☐ Parent Agreements ☐ Emergency Contacts ☐ Medical Information ☐ Release Information ☐ Special Needs ☐ Fee Calculated (Amt: _____) (1/95)

FRC ADULT EDUCATION ENROLLMENT FORM

Date: _____

Staff: _____

A. Is your family enrolled in the FRC?

- ☐ Yes ➜ (GoTo B)
- ☐ No ➜ (ENROLL FAMILY and GoTo C)
- ☐ Don't Know ➜ (ENROLL FAMILY - Must Check for Duplicate Enrollment)

B. Are you the Family Contact? ☐ Yes (Goto C) ☐ NO (complete name, phone and address below)

First/Last Name: _____ Phone: _____

Street: _____ Town: _____ ST: ____ ZIP: _____

C. FAMILY CONTACT: First Name/Last Name	FamID# or Birth Date

(FAMID#= Contact Persons: MO of Birth / First and Last Letters of Last Name / First Letter of First Name / YR of Birth / DAY of Birth / Duplicate Counter)

D. Which Adult Education Program are you enrolling in? (Check all that apply)

Adult Basic Education:

- ☐ Basic Literacy
- ☐ ABE/pre General Education Diploma (pre-GED)
- ☐ General Education Diploma (GED)
- ☐ English as a Second Language (ESL)
- ☐ External Diploma Program (EDP)
- ☐ Credit Diploma Program (CDP)
- ☐ U.S. Citizenship
- ☐ OTHER: _____

Adult Continuing Education: or Training

- ☐ Parenting
- ☐ Parent and Children's Education (PACE)
- ☐ Job Training
- ☐ OTHER: _____

E. What times and days are best for you to participate in the program? (Check all that apply)

AVAILABLE	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun
Morning							
Afternoon							
Evening							

F. What are your goals/expectations for the program? _____

_____

G. Do you need child care while attending the program? ☐ Yes ☐ No (Ages of Children: _____)

H. Do you need transportation to the site? ☐ Yes ☐ No

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

☐ Enrolled or ☐ Waiting List Date Accepted: _____ Date Exited: _____

Site: _____ Collaborator: _____ (1/95)

FRC POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT ENROLLMENT

Date: _____

Staff: _____

A. Is your family enrolled in the FRC?
- ☐ Yes → (GoTo B)
- ☐ No → (ENROLL FAMILY and GoTo C)
- ☐ Don't Know → (ENROLL FAMILY - Must Check for Duplicate Enrollment)

B. Are you the Family Contact? ☐ Yes (Goto C) ☐ NO --> First/Last Name: _____ Phone: _____

Street: _____ Town: _____ ST: _____ ZIP: _____

C. FAMILY CONTACT: First Name/Last Name	FamID# or Birth Date

(FAMID#= Contact Persons: MO of Birth / First and Last Letters of Last Name / First Letter of First Name / YR of Birth / DAY of Birth / Duplicate Counter)

D. CHILD: First/Last Name	Grade	School	Teacher

E. Referred By: Name: _____ F. Agency/School/etc. _____

G. Reason for Referral: _____

Follow Up: H. With Who: _____ I. Relationship: _____

J. Permissions/Releases

☐ Parent Agreements ☐ Emergency Contacts ☐ Medical Information ☐ Release Information ☐ Special Needs ☐ Fee Calculated (Amt: _____)

K. Program	Collaborator	Site	Days	Time	# of hrs weekly	Wait List	Enroll Date	Exit Date
1								
2								
3								
4								

Comments:

159

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

(1/95)

FRC FAMILIES IN TRAINING ENROLLMENT FORM

Date: _____

A. Is your family enrolled in the FRC? ☐ Yes ➜ (GoTo B) Staff: _____
☐ No ➜ (ENROLL FAMILY and GoTo C)
☐ Don't Know ➜ (ENROLL FAMILY - Must check for Duplicate Enrollment)

B. Are you the Family Contact? ☐ Yes (Goto C) ☐ NO (complete name, phone and address below)

First/Last Name: _____ Phone: _____

Street: _____ Town: _____ ST: _____ ZIP: _____

C. FAMILY CONTACT: First Name/Last Name	FamID# or Birth date

(FAMID#= Contact Persons: MO of Birth / First and Last Letters of Last Name / First Letter of First Name / YR of Birth / DAY of Birth / Duplicate Counter)

D. Which of the Families in Training Components do you wish to enroll in?

(check all that apply)

Enrolled In Components	√	Collaborator	Site	Wait List	Enroll Date	Exit Date
Play Groups						
Home/Personal Visits						
Developmental Screenings						
Parents in Group Meetings						
Parent Workshops						

Comments:

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

ERIC

Date: _____

FRC FAMILY DAY CARE PROVIDER TRAINING Staff: _____

A. Last Name	First Name	
Address (Street/Town/State/Zip)		Phone #

B. Are you registered with the State ☐ Yes ☐ No **If Yes:** a) What is your Registration # : _____

b) If registered, check the ages of the children you are registered to serve and 2) beside the age enter the number of children you are registered for at each age group.

Registered For:	**(Number)**	**Registered for:**	**(Number)**
☐ Birth to 1 year old	( )	☐ Before and After Kindergarten	( )
☐ Ones and Twos	( )	☐ School Age	( )
☐ Threes and Fours	( )		

C. Please check any accreditations and/or certifications you have and enter the date on which they were earned.

☐ First Aid on _____ ☐ CPR on _____

☐ CDA on _____ ☐ Other (please describe) _____

D. What are you enrolling for today? _____

E. What other training opportunities would you be interested in attending? (Check all that apply)

☐ First Aid/CPR ☐ Technical Assistance

☐ Workshops ☐ Playgroups

☐ Lending Library ☐ Support Groups

☐ Home Visits/Mentoring ☐ Nutrition

☐ Other (please describe)_____

F. What are the best days and times for you to attend workshops? (check all that apply)

F. Days/ Times	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun
Morning							
Afternoon							
Evening							

G. Would you like a home visit? ☐ Yes ☐ No **If YES:** What day and time? Day: _____ Time: _____

H. Which (if any) agencies do you contract with? _____

I. What school district are you in? _____

J. How did you find out about the FRC training? _____

K. Are you listed with INFOLINE? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't Know

most of the children you serve: ☐ walk to school? ☐ take a bus to school?

Comments:

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

(1/95)

FRC RESOURCE / REFERRAL/ FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES CONTACT LOG (1/95)

Date _____ Staff _____ Time Begin _____ Time End _____

CALLER'S NAME: _____

☐ Parent ☐ Caregiver ☐ Other _____

Phone #: _____

NOTE: _____

(Check all That Apply)

NATURE OF CONTACT
- ☐ Advice on a problem
- ☐ Answer specific question
- ☐ Referral for Service
- ☐ Registration for Program
- ☐ Consultation
- ☐ Meeting Arrangements
- ☐ Planning Discussion
- ☐ Emergency/Crisis

INFORMATION PROVIDED:
- ☐ Location of Activity
- ☐ Child Care
- ☐ Drop - In
- ☐ Internal Library
- ☐ External (public) Library
- ☐ Single Event
- ☐ Education/Training
- ☐ Support Activity
- ☐ Home Visit
- ☐ Counseling
- ☐ Other Resource
- ☐ Specific Materials
- ☐ General FRC Information

Nature of Contact: _____

Referred To: _____ ☐ **FRC Family Support Services**

Follow-up: FAMID# _____

Date _____ Staff _____ Time Begin _____ Time End _____

CALLER'S NAME: _____

☐ Parent ☐ Caregiver ☐ Other _____

Phone #: _____

NOTE: _____

(Check all That Apply)

NATURE OF CONTACT
- ☐ Advice on a problem
- ☐ Answer specific question
- ☐ Referral for Service
- ☐ Registration for Program
- ☐ Consultation
- ☐ Meeting Arrangements
- ☐ Planning Discussion
- ☐ Emergency/Crisis

INFORMATION PROVIDED:
- ☐ Location of Activity
- ☐ Child Care
- ☐ Drop - In
- ☐ Internal Library
- ☐ External (public) Library
- ☐ Single Event
- ☐ Education/Training
- ☐ Support Activity
- ☐ Home Visit
- ☐ Counseling
- ☐ Other Resource
- ☐ Specific Materials
- ☐ General FRC Information

Nature of Contact: _____

Referred To: _____ ☐ **FRC Family Support Services**

Follow-up: FAMID# _____

Date _____ Staff _____ Time Begin _____ Time End _____

CALLER'S NAME: _____

☐ Parent ☐ Caregiver ☐ Other _____

Phone #: _____

NOTE: _____

(Check all That Apply)

NATURE OF CONTACT
- ☐ Advice on a problem
- ☐ Answer specific question
- ☐ Referral for Service
- ☐ Registration for Program
- ☐ Consultation
- ☐ Meeting Arrangements
- ☐ Planning Discussion
- ☐ Emergency/Crisis

INFORMATION PROVIDED:
- ☐ Location of Activity
- ☐ Child Care
- ☐ Drop - In
- ☐ Internal Library
- ☐ External (public) Library
- ☐ Single Event
- ☐ Education/Training
- ☐ Support Activity
- ☐ Home Visit
- ☐ Counseling
- ☐ Other Resource
- ☐ Specific Materials
- ☐ General FRC Information

Nature of Contact: _____

Referred To: _____ ☐ **FRC Family Support Services**

Follow-up: FAMID# _____

FRC EVENT/SERVICE LOG

A. Date Service Provided: _____ **B. Staff or Collaborator:** _____

C. Number of participants _____ people **D. Hours of Service** _____ hours

E. Type of Service: ☐ single event ☐ one of small series ☐ OTHER _____

F. Site: ☐ FRC Center ☐ Other: _____

G. Check the core service area(s) below and check or describe the specific type of service within the core group.

☐ **Child Care:** ☐ Preschool ☐ Before School (School Age) ☐ After School (School Age)

☐ **Families In Training:** ☐ Playgroup Type: _____ ☐ Developmental Screening
☐ Home Visit ☐ Group Parent Meeting ☐ Parent Workshops

☐ **Adult Education:** ☐ **ABE:** ☐ pre-GED ☐ GED ☐ ESL ☐ EDP ☐ CDP ☐ USCIT ☐ OTHER

If OTHER (describe): _____

☐ **CE:** ☐ Parenting ☐ PACE ☐ OTHER _____

☐ **Pos. Youth Develop:** Description _____

☐ **Training Family Day Care Providers:** Description _____

☐ **Resource and Referral:** (USE "FRC RESOURCE AND REFERRAL CONTACT LOG")

☐ **Staff Development:** Description _____

☐ **Collaboration:** Description _____

☐ **OTHER:** (Please Describe) _____

ROSTER Date: _____

NAME (First and Last)	FRC Enrolled	FAMID# or FRC Contacts Last Name and Birth date	HRS

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

ROSTER Service: _____ Date: _____ Page ___ of ___

NAME (First and Last)	FRC Enrolled	FRC Id# or FRC Contacts Last Name and Birth Date	HRS

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

B. Family Resource Center Funding and Budget Survey

Family Resource Center Funding and Budget Survey

Purpose: To obtain information about funding and allocation of resources across Family Resource Center core services.

Design: A written survey was developed to gather information from administrators about the sources and amount of funding controlled by the FRCs, types of value of in-kind donations, funding for each component, and whether funding or budget changes were expected.

Method: The Funding and Budget Survey was administered at two points in time to monitor changes over time. The first survey was distributed to administrators at the February, 1995 administrators meeting. The data gathered from this first survey served as a baseline about the funding resources of the Family Resource Centers.

A second revised version of the Funding and Budget Survey was mailed to all the FRC administrators in January, 1996. This second survey was used to document budget changes and to look for patterns in the allocation of resources

Administrators at each of the 18 centers completed both surveys. Results from the first Funding and Budget Survey were summarized in the *Annual Report of the Outside Evaluation of Connecticut's Family Resource Centers, 1995*. Findings from the second Funding and Budget Survey were reported in the Draft Preliminary Report of the *Connecticut Family Resource Center Outside Evaluation,* submitted in May, 1996.

FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER FUNDING AND BUDGET SURVEY

Name of Center_____

Location_____

Current Fiscal Year Started_____ **and Ends**_____

Please give the following information for the current fiscal year as of January 1, 1996. Include only those funds controlled by the FRC.

ANNUAL FUNDING: SOURCE AND AMOUNT OF FUNDING CONTROLLED BY FRC	
Source	**Amount**
Federal FRC Grant	
State FRC Grant	
Other Grants - *List Separately*	
State Contracts - *List Separately* (i.e., Social Service, Adult Education)	
Additional Program Income - *List Separately* (i.e., Child Care fees for services)	
All Other Income - *List Sources* (i.e., individual donations, business contributions)	
TOTAL The total for funding should equal the total for expenses on page 2	

Please copy page if more space needed.

FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER FUNDING AND BUDGET SURVEY

Name of Center_____

BUDGET FOR CURRENT FISCAL YEAR Include only those expenses paid for with FRC controlled funds	
If you are not sure of how expenses break out by program, give your best estimate, based on the percentage of time/resources used by the program component. We realize that people often wear many different hats and appreciate your best estimate to allocate time and resources to components.	
Component	**Amount**
Overall FRC Administration - for operating the FRC as a whole.	
Individual FRC Programs - include all expenses for each program/ component (i.e.,. salaries, fringe benefits, materials, rental). If a component is not offered or is paid for by an other organization, write N/A not applicable.	
Preschool Child Care	
Before and After School Child Care	
Positive Youth Development	
Parents as Teachers	
Adult Education	
Family Day Care Training	
Resource and Referral	
Other (*List*)	
TOTAL The total for expenses should be the same as the total for funding on page 1.	

Has there been a major change in your funding or budget since the beginning of the fiscal year? If yes, how?

Do you expect major changes in your funding or budget between now and the end of the fiscal year? If yes, what changes do you anticipate? (Continue on back of page if needed).

FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER FUNDING AND BUDGET SURVEY

Name of Center_____

IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS TO FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER

Please check all of the in-kind contributions your FRC has received or expects to receive during the current fiscal year. This list was developed from the in-kind contributions listed on last year's survey.

If you know the value of in-kind contributions, either for specific items or the total value, please fill them in. If you do not know the value, leave the space blank. There is no problem if you do not know the value.

	Check if FRC has received or expects to receive in-kind contribution this fiscal year from:		
Type of In-kind Contribution	**School or School District**	**Community Agency**	**Value**
Building renovation			
Classroom or meeting space			
Office space			
Utilities (i.e., heat, lights)			
Telephone			
Transportation			
Administrative supplies			
Classroom/program materials			
Snacks/food			
Promotional expenses			
Professional development for staff or volunteers			
FICA, insurance			
Professional Services			
FRC administrator's salary			
Supervision (i.e., principal, program director)			
Teachers (i.e., preschool, summer school)			

	Check if FRC has received or expects to receive in-kind contribution this fiscal year from:		
Type of In-kind Contribution	**School or School District**	**Community Agency**	**Value**
Nurse			
Social worker/community outreach worker			
Accounting/bookkeeping			
Secretarial or administrative support			
After school security			
Cleaning/maintenance			
Program Services			
Positive Youth Development			
Child Care			
Special Education			
Adult Education			
Food Service			
Other			
Total Value of In-Kind Contributions			

C. Family Resource Center Staffing Survey

Family Resource Center Staffing Survey

Purpose: To obtain information about staffing patterns across the Family Resource Centers.

Design: The Staffing Survey was developed by RMC using the staffing portion of the National Even Start Evaluation as a template. The written survey collected information about the number and types of positions funded by the FRC, salaries and benefits, and participation in educational and training opportunities by FRC staff members.

Method: The Staffing Survey was administered at two points in time to monitor changes over time. The first survey was distributed to administrators at the February, 1995 administrators meeting. The data gathered for this first survey served as a baseline about staffing positions at the Family Resource Centers.

A second revised version of the Staffing Survey was mailed to all the FRC administrators in January, 1996. This second survey was used to document changes in staffing patterns.

Administrators at each of the 18 centers completed both surveys. Results from the first Staffing Survey were summarized in the *Annual Report of the Outside Evaluation of Connecticut's Family Resource Centers, 1995*. Findings from the second Staffing Survey were reported in the Draft Preliminary Report of the *Connecticut Family Resource Center Outside Evaluation*, submitted in May, 1996.

FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER

STAFF CHARACTERISTICS, ASSIGNMENTS, AND TRAINING SURVEY

January 1996

The following questions ask about project staff. Report head counts rather than FTEs. Most questions ask only about staff paid with Family Resource Center funds. When responding to these questions, include staff if any part of their salary is paid by the Family Resource Center.

1. How is the time of FRC paid staff allocated? Give hours per week. Include both full and part-time employees.

Job Title	Check One		Estimated Hours Per Week By Component								Total Hours
	Full-time	Part-time	FRC Admin.	Preschool Child Care	Before/After Sch. Child Care	Adult Ed	Parents as Teachers	Positive Youth Dev.	Day Care Training	Resource & Referral	

Please copy page if more space is needed

2. Are there any full-time staff paid partially by the FRC and partially by another funding source? The total percent should equal 100% even if that person does not work full-time.

Job Title	Percent of Salary Paid by FRC	Percent of Salary Paid by Other Source	Other Source of Funding

3. Are there any part-time staff paid partially by the FRC and partially by another funding source? The total percent should equal 100% even if that person does not work full-time.

Job Title	Percent of Salary Paid by FRC	Percent of Salary Paid by other source	Other Source of Funding

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

4. Please describe by **job title** if FRC staff are salaried or paid by the hour, and if they receive benefits.

Job Title	Paid by Salary	Paid by the Hour	Benefits Yes	Benefits No
1. _____	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. _____	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. _____	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. _____	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. _____	☐	☐	☐	☐
6. _____	☐	☐	☐	☐

5. How many volunteers do you have? Enter the number of volunteers working in each instructional area per month. If volunteers work in more than one area, count them under each area, but count them only once in the total. Exclude guest speakers and other infrequent visitors.

Number Volunteers Per Month

_____ FRC Administration
_____ Adult Education
_____ Parents as Teachers
_____ Preschool Child Care
_____ Before and After School Child Care
_____ Positive Youth Development
_____ Family Day Care Training
_____ Resource and Referral
_____ Other
_____ **Total Volunteers**

6. Enter the **number** of Administrators/Directors, Program Coordinators/Teachers, Parent Educators, and Paraprofessionals **paid by the Family Resource Center** who fit the description in each of the questions below.

	Administrator/ Director	**Program Coordinator/ Teacher (i.e. early childhood, adult education, PYD teachers)**	**Parent Educator (i.e., play specialist home visitor, family therapist)**	**Para-professional (i.e., secretary, aides, non-certified personnel)**
a. Highest level of education completed was:				
Did not complete diploma or GED	_____	_____	_____	_____
High school diploma or GED	_____	_____	_____	_____
AA	_____	_____	_____	_____
BA/BS	_____	_____	_____	_____
MA/MS/MEd	_____	_____	_____	_____
PhD/EdD	_____	_____	_____	_____
b. Have received special certification or endorsements (including CDA) relevant to instruction:	_____	_____	_____	_____
c. Have had ____years experience in the areas they direct, teach or assist:				
< 1 year	_____	_____	_____	_____
1-5 years	_____	_____	_____	_____
5-10 years	_____	_____	_____	_____
More than 10 years	_____	_____	_____	_____

7. How much inservice training do your Administrators/Directors, Program Coordinators/ Teachers, Parent Educators, and Paraprofessionals receive during the program year? Please indicate the number of staff paid by the Family Resource Center under each instructional assignment who had each of the following amounts of inservice training:

The total staff for each assignment should equal the numbers given for previous questions.

Staff Assignment	None (no service)	1 day (1-8 hrs)	2-5 days (9-40 hrs)	5-10 days (41-80 hrs)	11+ days (81 hrs)	Total Staff
Administrators/Directors	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Program Coordinator/Teachers	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Parent Educator	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Positive Youth Counselor	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Early Childhood Staff	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Administrative Assistant	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Program Interns	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

8. How many of your Administrators/Directors, Program Coordinators/Teachers, Parent Educators, and Paraprofessionals participate in inservice training on each of the following during the current program year? Include only Family Resource Center paid staff.

	No Staff	Some Staff	Most Staff
Program Coordination			
Recruitment	☐	☐	☐
Retention strategies	☐	☐	☐
Team building	☐	☐	☐
Interagency collaboration	☐	☐	☐
Local program evaluation	☐	☐	☐
National program evaluation	☐	☐	☐
Planning or program improvement	☐	☐	☐
Conducting home visits	☐	☐	☐
Visiting other programs	☐	☐	☐
First Aid, CPR, or emergency procedures	☐	☐	☐
Adult Education			
ESL	☐	☐	☐
Reading, writing, math, social studies	☐	☐	☐
Vocational/occupational	☐	☐	☐
Assessment	☐	☐	☐
Parenting Education			
Parent's role as a teacher	☐	☐	☐
Parent and child activities	☐	☐	☐
Child rearing, child development	☐	☐	☐
Life skills (e.g., consumer awareness, health and nutrition)	☐	☐	☐
Early Childhood Education			
ESL	☐	☐	☐
School readiness	☐	☐	☐
Child development (e.g., developmentally appropriate practices)	☐	☐	☐
Classroom or behavior management	☐	☐	☐
Assessment	☐	☐	☐
Positive Youth Development	☐	☐	☐

	No Staff	Some Staff	Most Staff
Strategies for Working With Families			
Assessing family	☐	☐	☐
Relating instruction to ethnic/cultural background	☐	☐	☐
Dealing with family or personal problems (e.g., family violence, chemical dependency)	☐	☐	☐
Adapting instruction for learners with special needs	☐	☐	☐
	☐	☐	☐
Other *(specify)*			
_____	☐	☐	☐
_____	☐	☐	☐

D. Family Resource Center Participation Survey

Family Resource Center Participation Survey

Purpose: To collect data on participants' utilization and perceptions of the Family Resource Centers.

Design: The survey used a short questionnaire developed by RMC after interviews with staff and parents at Family Resource Center sites. The questionnaire was written in English and translated for a Spanish version. Four areas are included in the questionnaire.

1) demographic data describing each participant's family;

2) information describing each family's utilization of the Family Resource Center and its programs, and barriers to utilization;

3) participants' satisfaction with the Family Resource Center; and

4) participants' perceptions of the impact of the Family Resource Center on themselves, their family, children, and community.

Method: Beginning in December, 1995, questionnaires in both languages were mailed to FRC site administrators to be distributed to adults whose families were dis-enrolling from the Family Resource Center. These questionnaires were used as exit interview questionnaires and were collected throughout the spring until the end of May, 1996. During March and April, 1996, a more intensive effort at soliciting completed questionnaires was carried out for those adults whose families were enrolled in the Family Resource Center. The same questionnaire was used for both exiting and enrolled participants.

Administrators and staff members gave questionnaires directly to participants or gave them to program directors and teachers to give to families. Participation was completely voluntary. Those who agreed to participate were asked to complete the questionnaires and seal them in an attached envelope. These sealed envelopes were returned to the Family Resource Center for mailing to RMC.

The exit interview questionnaires produced a very small return due, according to FRC administrators, to the difficulty of distributing the questionnaires to dis-enrolling participants and collecting them once given out. Consequently, these questionnaires were combined with questionnaires from enrolled participants to produce the sample for analysis. There is a slight chance that this method may have resulted in some duplicate questionnaires, i.e., participants completed one questionnaire while enrolled and then another one when exiting. However, administrators were asked to try to prevent this from happening by asking participants if they had already completed the questionnaire.

Data from the survey were entered into SPSS data analysis software and analyzed for descriptive information and hypothesized relationships by RMC staff. Initial findings were reported in Draft Preliminary Report of the *Connecticut Family Resource Center Outside Evaluation*. Each FRC administrator also received findings pertaining to his or her center only.

Sample: Attempts were made to get representation from all programs but, due to scheduling and participation, this was not always possible. Consequently, there may be over-representation of some types of programs and participants in the data. For example, because the survey was of adults, it may under-represent participation in Positive Youth Development programs because parents have less contact with these programs.

n = 750 respondents from 18 sites across Connecticut

Site participation ranged from 9 to 92 respondents. Average response was 42 respondents per site. At the time the respondents completed the questionnaires, 90.3% currently enrolled in Family Resource Centers. Slightly more than half (55%) had been enrolled one year or less.

Characteristics of Respondent Families		
Ages of children in respondents' families	Infant - 2 years	24.9% (357)
	3 - 5 years	31.7 (455)
	6-8 years	21.5 (309)
	9-11 years	11.7 (168)
	12-14 years	7.7 (104)
	15-17 years	2.9 (42)
Family ethnic group *	African American	16.0%
	European (not Hispanic)	26.0
	American Indian/ Alaska Native	4.0
	Hispanic	19.0
	Asian/Pacific Islander	3.0
	Other **	39.0
Primary language used in home	English	85%
	Spanish	8
	Other ***	7
Yearly household income	less than $20,000	39%
	$20,000 - $30,000	17
	$30,001 - $40,000	14
	$40,001 - $50,000	9
	$50,001 - $60,000	7
	over $60,000	15

* Total is greater than 100%. Respondents were able to indicate more than one family group.

** Other includes groups identified as "mixed" or by country or region rather than ethnicity, e.g., Caribbean, Haitian, North African, etc.

*** Other includes Bengali, Cambodian, Chinese, Creole, French, Haitian, Polish, Portuguese, Laotian, and Vietnamese.

Date: _____

Family Resource Center Participant Survey

We want to learn about your family's experience with the Family Resource Center (FRC). Please answer the questions below as best you can. Answering them is voluntary and you do not have to sign your name. This survey is sponsored by the Family Resource Centers of Connecticut and the Connecticut State Department of Education.

1. Which Family Resource Center (FRC) do you or your family use?

   (Town or school name) _____

2. How long have you or your family participated in FRC activities?

   ___ Less than 6 months ___ 6 months - 1 year ___ 1 - 2 years ___ More than 2 years

3. Below is a list of programs commonly offered at Family Resource Centers. Your FRC may offer all or only some of these programs. For each program listed below, please check the box that describes how often you or a member of your family used the Family Resource Center program during the last year.

	REGULARLY	OCCASIONALLY	NEVER
a. Preschool child care	☐	☐	☐
b. Before and after school child care	☐	☐	☐
c. Adult Education classes/tutoring	☐	☐	☐
d. Parents as Teachers (parenting classes, parent/child play groups, home visits)	☐	☐	☐
e. Positive Youth Development activities (mini courses, clubs, organized sports, field trips)	☐	☐	☐
f. Training for family day care providers	☐	☐	☐
g. Resource and Referral (FRC staff giving you information and referrals to local agencies for medical, housing, child care, employment and other needed services)	☐	☐	☐
h. Other programs: _____	☐	☐	☐
(Please name.) _____	☐	☐	☐

4. What other services (if any) would you like to see offered by your Family Resource Center?

   (Please list below.)

   _____

   _____

5. Does the Family Resource Center offer programs your family would like to participate in but is unable to? _____ NO _____ YES

If yes: Which program (s)? _____

What has prevented you from participating in programs you are interested in? (Check all that apply.)

___ Time/schedule of program
___ Cost of program
___ We do not have transportation
___ We do not feel welcome
___ Program has no openings
___ Other reasons: _____

6a. Please check **ALL** the statements **THAT APPLY** to you and your family.

Using the Family Resource Center means ....

_____ I miss less work or school because child care is available.
_____ I worry less about my child because I know he/she is getting quality child care.
_____ I have somewhere to turn if I need help.
_____ I have learned new skills.
_____ I have learned what to expect of children at different ages.
_____ I have learned new ways to discipline my child.
_____ I am more comfortable in my child's school.
_____ I have gained more education.
_____ I have received training and home day care licensing information.
_____ I have become friends with other parents.
_____ I feel there is someone who cares about my family.
_____ relationships in my family are better.
_____ my child is in a safe place when I cannot be with him/her.
_____ my child has something interesting and fun to do.
_____ my child is learning new skills or is taking part in new activities.
_____ my child has made new friends.
_____ my child had a better transition to kindergarten.
_____ my child is doing better in school.
_____ my neighborhood feels closer together.
_____ my neighborhood is improving.
_____ other (please describe): _____

6b. **Please put a star * by the ONE statement in 6a. above that has been the MOST important to your family.**

7. Please check the **ONE** box that **BEST** describes how satisfied you are with the following aspects of the Family Resource Center.

	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
Convenience of location	☐	☐	☐	☐
Hours of service	☐	☐	☐	☐
Types of programs offered	☐	☐	☐	☐
Quality of programs offered	☐	☐	☐	☐
Family Resource Center staff	☐	☐	☐	☐
Overall rating of FRC	☐	☐	☐	☐

8. Are you still participating in FRC activities? _____ YES ____ NO
   If No, why not? _____
   _____
   _____

To help us learn who is served by the Family Resource Centers, please complete the questions below.

9. Number of children and adults in each age group living in your household:

Age	How many?	Age	How many?
Infant - 2 years	_____	12 - 14 years	_____
3 - 5 years	_____	15 - 17 years	_____
6 - 8 years	_____	18 years or older	_____
9 - 11 years	_____		

10. Primary language used in home: ____English ____Spanish ____Other (specify) _____

11. Family ethnic group (Please check all that apply.):
    ___African American ___American Indian/Alaska Native ___ Asian/Pacific Islander
    ___European (not Hispanic) ___Hispanic ___Other: _____

12. Yearly household income:
    ___$20,000 or below ___$40,001 - $50,000
    ___$20,001 - $30,000 ___$50,001 - $60,000
    ___$30,001 - $40,000 ___Over $60,000

13. If you have any other comments you would like to make about the Family Resource Center, please write them here. If you need more space, please use the back of this page.

Please return this survey in the attached prepaid envelope as soon as possible.
Thank you for your help.

Fecha _____

Encuesta para Participantes en los Centros de Recursos para la Familia

Deseamos conocer la experiencia de su familia con el Centro de Recursos para la Familia (CRF). Favor de contestar de la mejor manera posible, las preguntas que a continuación aparecen. Su participación es voluntaria y anónima. Esta encuesta está patrocinada por los Centros de Recursos para la Familia y el Departamento de Educación del Estado de Connecticut.

1. ¿Qué Centro de Recursos para la Familia utilizan usted y su familia?
   (Nombre del pueblo, de la ciudad, o de la escuela) _____

2. ¿Durante cuánto tiempo ha participado usted o su familia en las actividades del CRF?
   ☐ Menos de 6 meses ☐ 6 meses - 1 año ☐ 1 - 2 años ☐ más de 2 años

3. A continuación aparece una lista de los programas más comunes que los Centros de Recursos para las Familias ofrecen. Su CRF puede ofrecer todos o solo algunos de estos programas. Para cada uno de los programas mencionados a continuación, favor de marcar el cuadro que describa la frecuencia con que usted o los miembros de su familia usaron el programa del Centro de Recursos para la Familia durante el año pasado.

		REGULARMENTE	OCASIONALMENTE	NUNCA
a.	Cuidado de niños de edad pre-escolar	☐	☐	☐
b.	Cuidado de niños en horas no escolares	☐	☐	☐
c.	Educación para Adultos/tutoría	☐	☐	☐
d.	Los Padres Son Maestros (desarrollo de las destrezas de la crianza de niños; grupos de juego para padres/hijos; visitas al hogar)	☐	☐	☐
e.	Actividades para el Desarrollo de Una Juventud Positiva (mini-cursos, clubes, actividades deportivas, excursiones)	☐	☐	☐
f.	Entrenamiento de cuidadores de niños	☐	☐	☐
g.	Recursos y Consejo (personal del CRF le proporciona información de las agencias locales a cargo de los servicios médicos, de ayuda para la vivienda, cuidado de niños, empleo, y otros servicios para la comunidad.)	☐	☐	☐
h.	Otros programas:. (Favor de nombrarlos.)_____	☐	☐	☐

4. ¿ Cuáles otros servicios (si alguno) le gustaría que fueron ofrecidos por su Centro de Recursos para la Familia ? (Favor de listarlos.)

_____

5. ¿Ofrece su Centro de Recursos para la Familia programas en los cuales su familia desearía participar pero no puede? No ☐ Sí ☐
Si su respuesta es "sí," ¿cuál(es) programas? _____

¿Qué le ha impedido participar en los programas que le interesan?
☐ Horario del programa ☐ Costo del programa ☐ Falta de transportación
☐ Falta de lugar en el programa ☐ No nos sentimos bienvenidos
☐ Otras razones: _____

6a. Favor de marcar **TODAS** las oraciones que correspondan a su familia.

Utilizar el Centro de Recursos para la Familia significa que...

☐ pierdo menos días de trabajo o escuela porque está disponible un servicio de cuidado para mis hijos.

☐ me preocupo menos por mi hijo porque sé que está recibiendo cuidado de calidad.

☐ tengo donde acudir si necesito ayuda.

☐ he adquirido nuevas destrezas.

☐ he aprendido algo del comportamiento de los niños.

☐ he aprendido nuevas maneras de disciplinar a mi hijo/a.

☐ me siento más cómodo/a en la escuela de mi hijo/a.

☐ he adquirido más educación.

☐ he recibido entrenamiento/información de como obtener una licencia para proporcionar cuidado a niños en el hogar.

☐ he hecho amistad con otros padres de familia.

☐ siento que hay alguien que se preocupa por mi familia.

☐ mis relaciones familiares son mejores.

☐ mi hijo/a está en un lugar seguro cuando no puedo estar con él/ella.

☐ mi hijo/a tiene algo interesante y divertido que hacer.

☐ mi hijo/a está aprendiendo nuevas destrezas o está participando en nuevas actividades.

☐ mi hijo/a tiene más amigos.

☐ mi hijo/a tuvó una mejor transición al kindergarten.

☐ mi hijo/a tiene más éxito en la escuela.

☐ mi vecindario está más integrado.

☐ mi vecindario está mejorando.

☐ otras razones (favor de describir): _____

6b. Por favor, marque con un asterisco * una oración de 6a que haya sido LA MÁS IMPORTANTE para su familia.

7. Favor de marcar **UN CUADRO** que mejor describa su grado de satisfacción con los aspectos del Centro de Recursos para la Familia que a continuación se mencionan:

	Muy satisfecho	Satisfecho	Insatisfecho	Muy insatisfecho
Ubicación	☐	☐	☐	☐
Horario de servicios	☐	☐	☐	☐
Tipo de programas ofrecidos	☐	☐	☐	☐
Calidad de los programas	☐	☐	☐	☐
Personal del CRF	☐	☐	☐	☐
Evaluación general del CRF	☐	☐	☐	☐

8. ¿Participa usted todaviá en actividades del Centro de Recursos para la Familia? ☐ Sí ☐ No
Si su respuesta es "No," ¿ porque no participa? _____
_____
_____

Para ayudarnos saber quién recibe los servicios de los Centros de Recursos para la Familia, favor de completar las siguientes preguntas:

9. Número de niños y adultos en cada grupo que viven en su hogar:

Edad	¿Cuántos personas?	Edad	¿Cuántos personas?
Infante - 2 años	_____	12-14 años	_____
3 - 5 años	_____	15 -17 años	_____
6 - 8 años	_____	18 años en adelante	_____
9 - 11 años	_____		

10. Idioma del hogar: ☐ Inglés ☐ Español ☐ Otro (especifique)_____

11. Grupo étnico de la familia (Favor de marcar todos los que correspondan.):
☐ Afroamericano ☐ Indio Americano / Nativo de Alaska ☐ Asiático/Isleño del Pacífico
☐ Europeo (no Hispano) ☐ Hispano ☐ Otro (especifique) _____

12. Ingreso anual:
☐ $20,000 o menos ☐ $30,001 - $40,000 ☐ $50,001 - $60,000
☐ $20,001 - $30,000 ☐ $40,001 - $50,000 ☐ más de $60,000

13. Si desea hacer algún otro comentario al respecto del Centro de Recursos para la Familia, favor de usar este espacio. Si necesita espacio adicional, favor de usar el reverso de esta página.

Favor de enviarnos esta encuesta en el sobre adjunto lo más pronto posible.
Gracias por su ayuda.

E. Family Resource Center Profile Survey

Family Resource Center Profile Survey

Purpose: To obtain information from Family Resource Directors about the organization and delivery of the core services.

Design: Two written surveys consisting of both open-ended and close-ended questions were developed by RMC. Data were collected about the following:

1) organization and management of school relationships;

2) collaboration arrangements;

3) staff working relationships; and

4) service delivery of the seven core services.

Open-ended questions were used to gain a better understanding of goals and accomplishments, challenges, and use of local evaluation plans.

Method: The first Profile Survey was administered to all FRC administrators in November, 1994 at the administrators' retreat. The data gathered for this first survey served as a baseline about the operations of the Family Resource Centers.

A second revised version of the Profile Survey was mailed to all the FRC administrators in January, 1996. This second survey was used to document changes in the operations and management of the centers.

Administrators at each of the 18 centers completed both surveys. Data from the surveys were entered into SPSS data analysis software. Quantitative and qualitative data were analyzed for descriptive information about the variation among the centers in implementing the FRC service delivery model. Results from the first Profile Survey were summarized in the *Annual Report of the Outside Evaluation of Connecticut's Family Resource Centers, 1995*. Initial findings from the second Profile Survey were reported in the Draft Preliminary Report of the *Connecticut Family Resource Center Outside Evaluation,* submitted in May, 1996.

Family Resource Center (FRC) Profile

RMC Research Corporation
1000 Market Street
Portsmouth, NH 03801
Telephone: (800) 258-0802

FRC Name: _____

Fiscal Agent: _____

FRC Mailing Address:

_____

_____

_____

Name and title of person completing this form:

_____

_____

FRC Administration Location: _____

_____

Telephone: _____

It is important to have consistent information from each FRC. Please fill out every page of the profile survey, even if you do not offer a particular component. We need to be able to write an accurate description of your FRC. The information you provide to us, is one of the primary sources of information and will be critical in pulling together the final evaluation report. There are no right or wrong answers. We are investigating the variations of models within each FRC.

Please answer all of the questions on the following pages as completely and as accurately as you can. Please return the completed FRC Profile Survey by February 14, 1996 to RMC Research Corporation using the enclosed postage paid envelope. If you have any questions about this survey, please contact Cynthia Harvell.

The results of this survey will be used to describe the different FRC models. No direct reference will be made to you or your FRC in reporting of the information collected.

Family Resource Center (FRC) Organization and Management

1. List the name of each school, the address and the name of the principal, for which your FRC provides services (use the back of this sheet to list additional schools):

	School	Address	Principal
a.	_____	_____	_____
b.	_____	_____	_____
c.	_____	_____	_____
d.	_____	_____	_____

2. We are trying to determine the frequency of contact between school staff and FRC staff. On a scale of 0 (never) or 1 (infrequently) to 5 (frequently), **circle** the number that best describes the level of frequency of contact. If there is **no contact**, please circle 0.

Classroom Teachers	Social Workers	Guidance Counselors	Principal	Other _____	Other _____
0 1..2..3..4..5	0 1..2..3..4..5	0 1..2..3..4..5	0 1..2..3..4..5	0 1..2..3..4..5	0 1..2..3..4..5
never infrequently frequently	never infrequently frequently	never infrequently frequently	never infrequently frequently	never infrequently frequently	never infrequently frequently

II. Collaboration

Please complete the following chart which identifies the nature of your collaborative network:

	Does your FRC have formal letters of collaboration		IF YES, Please describe the benefits of having a signed agreement to your FRC	IF NO, Please describe how informal collaboration works for your FRC
FRC Primary Service Components	**yes**	**no**		
example: Preschool	√		**By documenting a formal arrangement, it avoids surprises and possible misunderstandings**	
1. Preschool				
2. Child Care				
3. Families in Training				
4. Adult Education				
5. Day Care Training				
6. Positive Youth Development				
7. Resource & Referral				

2. Please describe the specific challenges you have observed in trying to maintain interagency collaborations:

Staff Working Relationships

The purpose of this section is to investigate the relationships between your FRC staff and others (i.e. school staff, other agencies, etc.).

1. Please check the line that **best** describes your meeting schedule with the following groups:

Staff Groupings	Regularly Scheduled Meetings				Meetings only scheduled as needed	never	not applicable
	weekly	bi-weekly	monthly	bi-monthly			
The entire FRC staff							
FRC staff by component							
The FRC and school staff							
The FRC staff with collaborating agency staff							
FRC Advisory Committee							
FRC decision-making by staff with families							

2. Does the FRC have an advisory committee? Yes _____ No _____ If **yes**, please answer questions 3,4,5. If **no**, go to the next page.

3. Please describe the purpose and function of the FRC advisory committee:

4. Please describe the role the FRC advisory committee takes in programming and planning FRC services:

5. Please describe the ways in which the FRC Advisory Committee reflects the culture and diversity of the community:

FRC Primary Service Components

The purpose of the following sections is to determine how the primary service components are offered in each FRC. Recognizing the broad variations in place, we ask that you please describe the manner in which each service is delivered. If you do not deliver the service component, please describe how this service is offered to families. If there is not an identified need for that service, please explain how you arrived at that decision. Use the other side of each page as necessary. Thank you.

A. Full-Time Preschool Child Care

In the first FRC Profile survey thirteen centers reported providing preschool child care. The primary challenges to providing this component were space and funding. A number of FRCs reported that collaborative efforts resulted in expanded services to preschool children.

A1. How do you offer preschool child care as a component of your FRC? Please check all that apply:

_____ a. Administered by FRC (If you check this line, please fill in the chart A3. below)

_____ b. Though collaboration (i.e., shared staff, contract for services) (If you check this line, please fill in the chart A3. below)

_____ c. By referral

_____ d. Do not provide (if you check this line please go to question A2.)

_____ e. Other. Describe:

A2. If you do not provide preschool child care services, what factors led to the decision not to offer this component as part of the FRC?

A3. If you checked line **a** or **b** in question A1 above, please complete the following chart:

List the Start Time/End time	Days of Week Preschool Childcare is provided						
	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thurs	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Start Time							
End Time							

A4. Does the FRC provide transportation for preschool child care? Yes _____ No _____

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

A5. transportation for preschool child care is available, please describe how this service is offered:

A6. Approximately how many children are enrolled in preschool child care? _____

A7. Approximately how many children does your FRC have on a waiting list for preschool child care? _____

A8. Do you have plans to increase your program's capacity to enroll more children in the next year? Yes _____ No _____

A8a. If yes, please describe your plans:

A9. Please check the ages of children served in your preschool child care program. Please check all that apply:

_____ 0 - 1 year olds _____ 2 - 3 year olds _____ 3 - 4 year olds _____ 4 - 5 year olds

A10. In your opinion, what have been the benefits for families using preschool child care:

A10a. In your opinion, what benefits have you observed for children:

A11. Please describe how the provision of preschool child care has changed over the last school year:

School - Age Child Care

Last year, fourteen FRCs reported providing school-age child care. Cost and space were sited as barriers to providing this service. In several communities, the service existed and the FRC was able to refer clients or provide scholarships for children. Many FRCs provided the service through collaboration, scholarships, and the use of creative space.

B1. How do you offer school-age child care as a component of your FRC? Please check all that apply:

_____ a. Administered by FRC (If you check this line, please fill in the chart B3. below)

_____ b. Though collaboration (i.e., shared staff, contract for services) (If you check this line, please fill in the chart B3. below)

_____ c. By referral

_____ d. Do not provide (if you check this line please go to question B2.)

_____ e. Other. Describe:

B2. If you do not provide school-age child care services, what factors led to the decision not to offer this component as part of the FRC?

B3. If you checked line **a** or **b** in question A1 above, please complete the following chart:

List the Start Time/End time	Days of Week School-Age Childcare is provided						
	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thurs	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Start Time							
End Time							

B4. Does the FRC provide transportation for school-age child care? Yes _____ No _____

B5. If transportation for school-age care is available, please describe how this service is offered:

B6. How many children are enrolled in school-age child care? _____

B7. How many children does your FRC have on a waiting list for school-age child care? _____

B8. Do you have plans to increase your program's capacity to enroll more children in the next year? Yes _____ No _____

B8a. If yes, please briefly describe your plans:

B9. Please check the ages of children served in your school-age child care program. Check all that apply:

_____ 5 - 6 year olds _____ 7 - 8 year olds _____ 9 -10 year olds _____ 11 - 13 year olds

B10. In your opinion, what have been the benefits for families using the school-age child care program:

B10a. In your opinion, what benefits have you observed for children:

B11. Please describe how the provision of school-age child care has changed over the last school year:

'amilies In Training (FIT)

Ve learned from the first FRC Profile Survey that each FRC had its own variation of activities in this component. Several FRCs listed FIT as one of the most critical to the overall success of the FRC model. We particularly want to be able to describe the methods used by each FRC to deliver this service. Please fill out the table and answer each question to best describe how your FRC continues to provide this service.

C1. Is Families In Training a component of your FRC? Check all that apply:

____ a. Administered by FRC (If you check this line, please fill in the chart C4. below)

____ b. Though collaboration (i.e., shared staff, contract for services) (If you check this line, please fill in the chart C4. below)

____ c. By referral

____ d. Do not provide (if you check this line please go to question C3.)

____ e. Other. Describe:

C2. Were parents involved in program decisions?

____ Yes, in some programs ____ Yes, in all programs ____ No

C2a. If yes, please provide two or three examples of how parents were involved in program decisions:

C3. What factors led to the decision not to offer FIT as part of the FRC?

211

210

C4. Please complete the following chart for those FIT services for which your FRC is directly responsible:

Please list the activities	Number of sessions per			Length of session	Average enrollment of participants		If you have a waiting list, how many?	Do you provide transportation?		Location	Particular benefits of this activity
	week	month	year	Hrs.	children	adults		yes	no		
examples: Playgroup	3	12	1	2hrs	25	12	14	√		Harbor School	positive role modeling
CPR Training				6hrs		38	9	√		City Hospital	prepares child for school health training

C5. Please describe how the provision of the FIT program has changed over the last school year?

C6. Do you have plans to increase FIT services in the next year? _____ Yes _____ No

C6a. If yes, please briefly describe your plans:

dult Education

ast year, adult education services varied greatly depending on the local community. There as evidence of extensive coordination with the state/local adult education programs. Only two centers provided transportation for this service and usually child care was provided at the FRC site, so parents could attend classes. Lack of space, limited funding, and limited transportation were reported as the barriers to providing this service.

D1. Do you offer Adult Education as a component of your FRC? Check all that apply:

_____ a. Administered by FRC (If you check this line, please fill in the chart D4. below)

_____ b. Though collaboration (i.e., shared staff, contract for services) (If you check this line, please fill in the chart D4. below)

_____ c. By referral

_____ d. Do not provide (if you check this line please go to question D3.)

_____ e. Other. Describe:

D2. How did your FRC involve families in program decisions?

D3. What factors led to the decision not to offer adult education as part of the FRC?

215

214

D4. If you checked line **a** or **b** in question D1 above, please complete the following chart:

Program/Course Offerings	Number of sessions per			Length of the session	What is the average enrollment?	Do you provide transportation?		Location	If you have a waiting list, how many?	In your opinion, what are the benefits to providing this service?
	week	month	year	hrs.		yes	no			
example: ABE	2			2	35	x		FRC	15	provides literacy skills

D5. Please describe how the provision of adult education has changed over the last school year:

D6. Do you have plans to increase adult education services in the next year? _____ Yes _____ No

D6a. If so, please briefly describe your plans:

Support and Training for Day Care Providers

Thirteen FRCs provided this component, but of those, almost 1/2 reported their services to day care centers were limited. The most common activities reported were: newsletters, workshops, support groups, and lending library (books and toys). Some of the strategies used to increase utilization include: inviting children; collaborating with parenting programs to include day care providers; and hiring the "right person".

E1. Do you offer support and training for day care providers as a component of your FRC?

_____ a. Administered by FRC (If you check this line, please fill in the chart E4. below)

_____ b. Though collaboration (i.e., shared staff, contract for services) (If you check this line, please fill in the chart E4. below)

_____ c. By referral only

_____ d. Do not provide (if you check this line please go to question E3.)

_____ e. Other

E2. How did you involve families in program decisions?

E3. What factors led to the decision not to offer support and training for day care providers as part of the FRC?

219

218

E4. If you checked line a or b in question E1 above, please complete the following chart:

Program/Course Offerings	Number of sessions per			Length of the session	What is the average enrollment?	Do you provide transportation?		Location	If you have a waiting list, how many?	In your opinion, what are the benefits to providing this service?
	week	month	year	hrs.		yes	no			
example: newsletter			2 x yr			x		all daycares		builds awareness and enhancers communication between centers and the FRC

E5. Please describe how the provision of support and training for day care providers has changed over the last school year:

Positive Youth Development (PYD)

Last year, several FRCs referred children to existing community services. Program variation was significant. High levels of integration and collaboration were evidenced in providing this service to youth. Three FRCs reported paying full-time staff to coordinate this service. This year, we are trying to collect data that will provide a richer picture of this service component and the ways in which it is offered to youth.

F1. Do you offer positive youth development as a component of your FRC? Check all that apply:

_____ a. Administered by FRC (If you check this line, please fill in the chart F4. below)

_____ b. Though collaboration (i.e., shared staff, contract for services) (If you check this line, please fill in the chart F4. below)

_____ c. By referral

_____ d. Do not provide (if you check this line please go to question F3.)

_____ e. Other. Describe:

F2. How did you involve families /youth in program decisions?

F3. What factors led to the decision not to offer positive youth development as part of the FRC?

223

222

F4 If you checked line a or b in question F1 above, please complete the following chart:

Program/Course I Offerings		Number of sessions per			When do you offer this program during the school day/weekend?				What is the average enrollment?	Do you provide transportation?		Location	If you have a waiting list, how many?	Who are your collaborators?	In your opinion, what are the benefits to providing this service?
	days of the week	week	month	year	before	after	during	weekend		yes	no				
example: homework help	M-F	5			x				35	x		Happy Hill School	12	town library	children are getting help and completing home work.

F5. Please describe how the provision of positive youth development has changed over the last school year?

F6. What strategies are used for recruiting youth for PYD (i.e., community center recruitment)?

F7. Do you have plans to increase positive youth development services in the next year? ____ Yes ____ No

F7a. If yes, please briefly describe your plans:

Resource & Referral Services (R&R)

Last year 50% of the FRCs funded R&R solely through FRC funds. Typically phone calls were recorded in a daily log, with follow up contact conducted on a case by case basis. Families learned about R&R from INFOLINE, word of mouth, school newsletters, and libraries. This year's Profile Survey will investigate how this service has changed over the last year.

G1. How do you offer R&R as a component of your FRC? Check all that apply.

_____ a. Administered by FRC (If you check this line, please fill in the chart G3. below)

_____ b. Though collaboration (i.e., shared staff, contract for services) (If you check this line, please fill in the chart G3. below)

_____ c. By referral

_____ d. Do not provide (if you check this line please go to question G2.)

_____ e. Other. Describe:

G2. What factors led to your decision not to offer Resource & Referral Services as part of your FRC?

G3. If you checked line **a** or **b** in question G1 above, please complete the following chart:

List the Start Time/End time	Days of Week that Resource & Referral Services are provided						
	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thurs	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Start Time							
End Time							

G4. How do you provide Resource & Referral Services? Check all that apply:

_____ FRC Staff _____ ans. machine _____ INFOLINE _____other _____

G5. How do families know that R&R is available?

G6. In your opinion, what are the benefits to families as a result of providing R&R?

G7. Please describe how the provision of R&R has changed over the last school year:

G8. Do you plan to increase resource and referral services in the next year? _____ Yes _____ No

G8a. If yes, please briefly describe your plans:

mary

ear, we asked some of you the same questions and learned that over half of the FRCs considered the FIT component to be the most critical. Most FRC ied strong support and involvement by school administrators as a primary determinant of success for the FRC model. This year, we want to know how you would evaluate your progress over the last year. Please answer each of the following questions.

1. Did you conduct a community needs assessment to determine the best utilization of your program funds? yes _____ no _____
   If yes, please describe how the results of your needs assessment were used? When was the needs assessment done? _____ month/year

2. Please describe the **three** most significant accomplishments achieved by your FRC over this past year:

3. Please describe the **three** greatest challenges this past school year working with the schools:

4. Please describe how the local evaluation efforts **have been** used:

231

230

a. Please describe how your local evaluation **can be** used:

5. Please list the **three** major circumstances or factors that have contributed to the success (growth) of your FRC during the past year:

6. Please describe **three** major goals you wish to accomplish this coming year:

7. In your opinion, what do you believe to be the **greatest** contribution your FRC makes to the school community?

F. Family Resource Center School Staff Survey

Family Resource Center School Staff Survey

Purpose: To obtain perceptions from school staff who are familiar with the FRC service delivery model.

Design: A written questionnaire was developed by RMC to gather information about the nature of the relationships between FRC and school staff members, the patterns of referrals to the centers from school staff members, the level of satisfaction with the FRC and degree of support for its services, and the perceptions of the effects of the FRC for families and their schools.

Method: FRC administrators were asked to distribute the surveys in June, 1996 to school staff members in schools and in grade levels where the FRC had a strong presence. School staff included any persons who might refer children and families to the FRC, such as teachers, guidance counselors, and social workers. The FRC administrators composed and attached a cover letter to each survey describing the purpose of the survey. School staff members were asked to complete the survey within two weeks to a central location in their school building. FRC administrators were responsible for collecting the returned surveys and mailing them to RMC. A total of 1185 School Staff Surveys were distributed, and 295 were returned for data analysis.

Data from the survey were entered into the SPSS data analysis software and analyzed for descriptive information and hypothesized relationships by RMC staff.

Sample: n=295 school staff members from schools where the 18 Family Resource Centers had a strong presence.

Characteristics of School Staff

Type of Staff	*Number of Staff*	*Percent of Staff*
Classroom Teachers: Curriculum Specialist, English, Math, Head Start, K-8, Special Education	230	78%
School Administrators: Principal, Assistant Principal, School Secretary, Office Staff, Support Staff	15	5%
Other School professionals: Social work, Nurse, Before & After School, ESL, Even Start, FRC, GED, Language, Library, Parent Educator, Physical Education, Physical Therapist, Psychologist, Reading, Speech, Technology, Title I, Custodian	50	17%
TOTAL	295	100%

Family Resource Center School Staff Survey

Thank you for taking a few minutes to complete this survey about the Family Resource Center (FRC) serving the children and families in your school/community. Please answer the questions below as best you can. Answering them is voluntary and you do not have to sign your name. This survey is sponsored by the Family Resource Centers of Connecticut and the Connecticut State Department of Education.

1. **Name of your school** _____ **City:** _____

2. **What grade level or specialty area (i.e. guidance, school nurse, special education) do you teach?**

   _____

3. **Where is your FRC located?**
   Please check one. ***The FRC for my school/community is located ....***

   ☐ in or adjacent to my school ☐ in another school in my district ☐ in a community-based organization in my district ☐ don't know

4. **How long have the FRC services been serving your school/community?**
   Please check one.

   ☐ less than 1 year ☐ 1-2 years ☐ 3-4 years ☐ more than 4 years ☐ don't know

5. **How do you typically find out about FRC services? Check all that apply.**

   ☐ I hear about FRC services at school staff meetings.

   ☐ I read about FRC services in school notices.

   ☐ I read about FRC services in community notices.

   ☐ I talk directly to FRC staff about services.

   ☐ I talk to other school staff about FRC services.

   ☐ Other, please list: _____

   _____

6. **Do you know what services the Family Resource Center provides in your school/ community? Check all that apply.**

- ☐ Preschool Child Care
- ☐ Before and After School Child Care
- ☐ Family in Training/Parents as Teachers
- ☐ Positive Youth Development (mini-courses, field trips, clubs)
- ☐ Adult Education Classes (GED, ESL, ABE)
- ☐ Training for Family Daycare Providers (workshops, newsletters, group meetings)
- ☐ Resource and Referral (FRC staff giving families information/referral to local agencies)
- ☐ Other programs, please list: _____

_____

7. a. **How many children and/or families have you referred to the FRC for services during this 95-96 school year? Please check one.**

☐ none ☐ 1-3 children ☐ 4-6 children ☐ 7 or more children

b. **Do you know the outcome of your referrals?** ☐ Yes ☐ No

c. **If you answered "Yes" to the above question, please complete the following.**

What services did the children and/or families receive? Please list.	Did these services take place in your school? Yes	No
_____	☐	☐
_____	☐	☐
_____	☐	☐
_____	☐	☐
_____	☐	☐

8. **Overall, how satisfied are you with the range and quality of FRC services? Please check one.**

☐ very satisfied ☐ satisfied ☐ dissatisfied ☐ very dissatisfied ☐ no opinion

9. **What impact do you think the FRC is having in your school/community?**

☐ high ☐ medium ☐ low ☐ none at all

10. **What impacts are you seeing the FRC have on families and your school? Please check all that apply.**

- ☐ More parents are coming to school sponsored events (sports, open houses, curriculum nights).
- ☐ More parents are coming to parent-teacher conferences.
- ☐ More parents are volunteering in school.
- ☐ More parents are returning school notices requiring parent signature.
- ☐ Parents are better able to help with their children's homework.
- ☐ Parents are more comfortable talking to their children's teachers.
- ☐ Parents are more able to manage their children's behavior.
- ☐ Parents are better able to communicate with school staff.
- ☐ Children are attending school more regularly.
- ☐ Children are coming to school more ready to learn.
- ☐ Children are transitioning from preschool to kindergarten more easily.
- ☐ Children with diverse backgrounds are transitioning more easily into my school.
- ☐ Children are behaving more appropriately in class.
- ☐ Children are completing their homework more regularly.
- ☐ There is earlier identification and referral of children needing specialized educational support services.
- ☐ There is improvement in teachers' ability to be sensitive to the needs of families.
- ☐ There are changes in curriculum to better meet the needs of all children.
- ☐ There are fewer behavior problems in my school.
- ☐ There is less graffiti and vandalism at my school.
- ☐ There is an improved school climate.
- ☐ There is better communication among school staff about the needs of children.
- ☐ Other, please list: _____

_____

11. **How many times have you talked directly with FRC staff this 95-96 school year? Please check one.**

☐ none ☐ 1-3 times ☐ 4-6 times ☐ 7 or more times

12. **How are you usually in contact with FRC staff? Please check all that apply.**

- ☐ through telephone calls
- ☐ through informal conversations in the hallway or teacher's room
- ☐ at general staff meetings
- ☐ at student specific conferences
- ☐ through running/organizing an FRC activity
- ☐ other, please list: _____

_____

13. **Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements:**

	strongly agree	agree	disagree	strongly disagree	don't know
a. The school administration supports the presence and work of the FRC.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. The school staff supports the presence and work of the FRC.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. I support the presence and work of the FRC.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

14. **What do you like the best about having an FRC for your school/community?**

_____

_____

15. **What do you like least about having an FRC for your school/community?**

_____

_____

16. **What improvements would you like to see in the FRC program?**

_____

_____

17. **Do you have any additional comments concerning an FRC for your school/ community?**

_____

_____

Thank you for your participation!

G. Family Resource Center Administrator Interview

Family Resource Center Administrator Interview

Purpose: To gather in depth information from administrators about the influence of the FRC within each community and the different ways the administrators believe the centers could be improved.

Design: An interview protocol was developed to gather information from administrators that had not been gathered by other methods and to gain a better understanding of the nature of the relationship between the FRC and the schools, the types of collaborative arrangements, and service integration as it relates to service delivery and effects for families.

Method: Telephone interviews were conducted with all 18 administrators between July and September, 1996. A telephone appointment was made with each administrator to conduct the interviews. The appointment was verified with a letter indicating the time and date of the scheduled interview and a set of interview questions. Each interview lasted between 45-60 minutes.

The information from the telephone interviews and site visits conducted in February, 1995 formed the basis for the Site Profiles contained in Part 1 of the Final Report.

Family Resource Centers' Administrators Interview Questions
May-June, 1996

1. How does collaboration with other services, other agency/program staff, etc. work for you?

   What seems to foster or encourage good collaboration for you?

   Why do you think your families benefit from your collaborations?

   How does partnering with collaborator affect how your FRC services are delivered?

   How has the community's response to the needs of FRC families changed?

2. What are some of the attributes/critical elements of integrating/coordinating services at your FRC (e.g. sharing of staff, integrated curriculum, sharing of space, etc.)?

   Describe some examples of service integration at your FRC?

   What is it about your service integration that makes a difference for children and families?

   How does program coordination/integration affect how FRC services are delivered?

   What has changed in your community human services system due to the FRC integrated services for FRC families?

3. What are the attributes/qualities that contribute to your relationship with the schools you serve?

   What would change if your FRC was (or was not) located in a public school building?

   How does your connection with the school(s) you serve contribute to what you do for children and families?

   Is there anything else you would like to add about your connection with schools and its benefits for service delivery?

   How does your FRC linked to public schools affect the community's human service delivery system?

4. What groups are represented on your Advisory Committee?

   Who is missing? Why? Are there plans to recruit these groups?

   How often does your Advisory Committee meet?

   What are some issues you have discussed at recent meetings?

   Are there ways that your Advisory Committee might be more effective?

5. What is special about your staff that contributes to your success?

   Please give specific examples.

6. Is there anything else you would like to say about your FRC and its services for families?

   Particularly about unserved populations due to funding shortage or recruitment issues?

H. Stakeholder Interview Questions and List of Stakeholders Interviewed

Stakeholder Interviews

Purpose: To obtain information from audiences in leadership positions with an involvement in the support of comprehensive, integrated service systems for families.

Design: An interview protocol was developed to gather information about the range of knowledge, understanding, and experiences stakeholders have had with comprehensive approaches to serving families and their familiarity with and perceptions of Connecticut's school-based Family Resource Center service delivery model.

Method: Telephone interviews were conducted with eight stakeholders. A stakeholder was defined as someone who has been in a leadership position in the Family Resource Center movement in Connecticut and who has a recognized influence and interest in the future of the centers. RMC identified the names of 10-12 potential stakeholders to interview. The list was submitted to the Connecticut State Department of Education for review and recommendations. The final list contained the name of eight stakeholders who agreed to be interviewed: two of the interviewees are associated with the state legislative process, three are from key positions in Connecticut state departments, and three are from agencies or services outside the state system. Interviews were conducted in September, 1996 and each interview lasted 30-45 minutes.

Data from the interviews were used to gain additional perspectives of the issues and perceptions concerning the implementation and effectiveness of the school-based service delivery model of the Family Resource Centers.

Stakeholder Telephone Interview Questions September - October 1996

1. What do you know about the Family Resource Centers in Connecticut?

   What has been your involvement with the FRC programs?
   When and how did you first learn about them?
   What is your understanding of the mission/purpose of the FRCs?

2. In your opinion, how important is it that Connecticut FRCs are school-based/linked?
   Why or why not?

3. What evidence do you see that the FRC are fulfilling their mission?
   What evidence would you like to see that they are accomplishing their goals?

4. Have you ever visited a FRC? Which one?

   (If yes)
   Did you talk to any parents or children while there?
   What did they say?
   What services do you feel are the most important? Why?
   How important is it that Connecticut FRC's collaborate with other community agencies?
   Why or why not?

5. Do you feel it is important that the FRCs serve all family regardless of income? Why or why not?

6. What do you think will be the future of the Connecticut FRCs?
   How do they fit into Connecticuts support system for families?

7. How do you plan to stay involved in the future of the FRC?

8. Is there anything else you would like to mention about the Connecticut FRC?

List of Stakeholders Interviewed

State

Jack Thompson, State Representative from Manchester

Peter Palermino (for Joyce Thomas - Division of Social Services)

George Coleman (Department of Education)

Private

Paul Vivian (state and private)

Maria Mojica (Graustein Memorial Fund)

Sherbie Worthen (United Way)

Jean Milstein (for Elaine Zimmuman - Commission on Children)

Local

Mary Jo Kramer, Superintendent, Milford

I. Family Resource Center Focus Group Protocols and Principals' Survey

Parent and Teacher Focus Group

Principals Focus Group and Survey

Family Focus Group - Integration

Collaboration Focus Group

Family Resource Center Focus Group Protocols and Principals' Survey

Purpose: To gain a better understanding of the implementations and effectiveness of the Family Resource Center Service Model as perceived by principals, school staff, parents, and collaborating providers

Design: Focus group protocols were developed by RMC Research Corporation to receive information about the value and effectiveness of the Family Resource Centers. Also, information was gathered from several perspectives (e.g., parents, teachers, principals, collaborating agencies) about the range of involvement with the FRCs.

Method: Six focus group sites were chosen by RMC staff because they represented exemplary practices of the FRC service delivery model in terms of solid school relationships, strong collaborative arrangements, and high levels of service integration. A focused discussion also was held with 12 school principals who attended a Family Resource Center administrators meeting. All focus group discussions were held between October, 1995, and March, 1996.

Administrators at the focus group site's were informed about the intent of the discussion and asked to help identify appropriate people to participate in the group. The administrators worked with RMC staff to contact participants and arrange a date and location for the meeting.

Focus groups were conducted by two RMC staff members. One staff person acted as a facilitator and the other was responsible for taking notes. All discussions were tape recorded. At the beginning of each session, the facilitator explained to the group the purpose of the discussion and how RMC staff planned to incorporate the information into the final report.

Parent and teacher focus group. Two focus group discussions were held at sites which have demonstrated strong relationship with the school administrations and school staff. The discussions examined characteristics of the relationships and began to identify implications of these characteristics for implementing the service delivery model of the FRCs. Nine parents and 11 school staff members participated in the first group, and nine school staff members and 11 parents were involved in the second group.

Principal focus group and survey. Twelve principals attending an FRC administrators meeting participated in a focus group discussion. Prior to the discussion, they were asked to complete a brief survey. Both the survey and focus group aimed at getting a better understanding of the principals' perceptions of the FRCs' relationships and value to the school climate, and the influence of the FRC services for children and their families.

Family focus group. Discussions were held at two sites which have demonstrated success in developing a school-based or school-linked integrated service delivery model. Ten parents participated in one group and four were involved in the second group. The discussion focused on families' experiences and involvement with the

Family Resource Center, what contributes to success from their perspective, and what barriers they encounter.

Collaboration focus group. Focus groups were held at two sites where concentrated efforts have been devoted to developing collaborations in the community. At one site three representatives from collaborating agencies participated in the focused discussion, and at the second site 10 agency representatives attended the meeting. Each group talked about the collaborative arrangements with the FRC and the challenges and benefits to building collaborative partnerships.

FRC Principal's Focus Group Questions
October 17, 1995

1. What is your involvement with the FRC?

2. Are families more involved in their children's education because of the FRC? If so, how?

3. Is there evidence that you have observed that children involved in FRC services come to school more ready to learn? What evidence?

4. What do you feel are the most important services theFRC offers to the families in your school? Why?

5. What other services should the FRC be offering? Why?

6. What is the major benefit of the FRC to your school?

7. Is the relationship/location of the FRC with your school critical to its success? What if the FRC were a CBO?

8. What have been some problems with your relationship with the FRC?

Principal Survey

RMC Research Corporation has been contracted by the State Department of Connecticut to evaluate Connecticut's Family Resource Centers (FRC). This evaluation includes an investigation of opinions and perceptions of those who have direct experiences with the Family Resource Centers. One area of primary interest is the effect for families having FRC services provided in a school-based or school-linked setting. As a principal, you have a unique perspective that we want to incorporate into our evaluation.

Please respond to this brief questionnaire and return it in the envelope provided to RMC Research Corporation, 1000 Market Street, Portsmouth, NH 03801. If you have any questions, please call either Mary Heath or Cynthia Harvell at 1-800-258-0802. Thank you for your assistance.

Name: _____ *School:* _____

The results of this questionnaire will be aggregated to inform the evaluation. No direct reference will be made to you or to your school in reporting of the information collected. The information you provide to us will remain confidential.

Circle the number that best describes your level of agreement/disagreement with the statements below.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know
1. It is your opinion, that the FRC is a fully integrated program in the school.	1	2	3	4	5
2. You fully understand the mission of the FRC and the various services offered.	1	2	3	4	5
3. You and your school staff refer families to the services offered by the FRC.	1	2	3	4	5
4. You see evidence (i.e., higher attendance at parent events) that the FRC has improved parents' participation in family activities in the school.	1	2	3	4	5
5. You observe that parents participate more frequently in parent-teacher conferences because of the FRC.	1	2	3	4	5

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know
6. You see evidence that the FRC has helped teachers and other school staff improve their relationships with families.	1	2	3	4	5
7. You see an improvement in school attendance of children participating in FRC services.	1	2	3	4	5
8. Your school staff and FRC staff have regular meetings.	1	2	3	4	5
9. You understand and observe the FRC providing services to families across a range of socio-economic groups.	1	2	3	4	5
10. You see the FRC services in the school responding to the needs of the school community and do not duplicate services already available in the community.	1	2	3	4	5
11. You see families accessing a range of services they need because of the FRC.	1	2	3	4	5
12. You and your staff interact more often with local social service agencies due to the FRC.	1	2	3	4	5
13. You observe that the school staff is more sensitive to the needs of the families as a result of the FRC.	1	2	3	4	5
14. You believe that it is important that the FRC is located physically within the school (answer only if the FRC is located within the school).	1	2	3	4	5
15. You believe that it is important that the FRC is linked to the school. (Answer only if the FRC is not located in your school building.)	1	2	3	4	5

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know
16. You see evidence that the FRC programs and staff have contributed to improving the school environment for families.	1	2	3	4	5
17. As the school leader, you believe that the FRC has helped you to redefine how support services are delivered to children and families within the school.	1	2	3	4	5

18. The greatest contribution the FRC has made in the school is . . . (please answer below)

19. Please describe the supports (space, staff, supplies, consultation, etc.) you provide the FRC (please answer below).

20. Comments

Parent and Teacher Focus Group Questions December, 1995 and February, 1996: the Value of the Relationship of Familiy Resource Centers with the Schools12/7/95

Parent questions:

1) How did you learn about the FRC?

2) What has been you and your families' involvement with the FRC?

3) Why do you feel it is important that the FRC is located in your school?

4) In your opinion, what are the benefits of having the FRC located in the school?

5) What might be some drawbacks to having the FRC located in the school?

6) How has the FRC changed your participation in your child's school?

7) How has the FRC changed your child's school performance?

8) In your opinion, what is the school's attitude toward the FRC?

If there is time:
9) What are the most important services to your family provided by the FRC?

10) What would improve FRC services for you and your family?

Teacher questions:

1) How did you first learn/hear about the FRC?

2) How does the FRC fit into the school? How do you communicate/relate with the FRC staff?

3) Do feel it is important that the FRC is located in the school?

4) What are the benefits to families having the FRC in the school?

5) What are the benefits to children having the FRC in the school?

6) What are the benefits to you and your school having the FRC in the school?

7) What prevents the FRC from being as successful as it could be in your school?

8) What are the most important services to children and to families provided by the FRC?

9) In your opinion, what would improve FRC services?

FRC Focus Group Protocol - Integration
Preamble

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this focus group discussion on Family Resource Centers. I'm Sharon Beckstrom, from RMC Research and director of the evaluation of the Family Resource Centers. I'll be your moderator for this session. My colleague, Barbara Wauchope, will be taking notes during the discussion and may have some questions for you toward the end of the session.

Each of you has been selected because you are an active participant in the North Hartford Family Resource Center and can contribute toward a better understanding of what having a Family Resource Center means to families. The information gathered today will be used, along with other information, to develop a report for the Connecticut Family Resource Centers which will be shared with other Family Resource Centers, communities interested in developing Family Resource Centers and with policy makers in Connecticut and nationally.

In a group interview like this, **we want to hear about your experiences and perceptions (what you think) about the Family Resource Center. There are no right or wrong answers. We want to know what you think.** We are taping the session in order to ensure accuracy in writing our report. However, you will not be identified by name when the session is written up. Everything will be anonymous.

Because we are taping I may occasionally ask you to speak up or talk one at a time, so Barbara and I can hear you clearly. I will be asking broad questions to be sure we get certain information, but I want the interaction to flow among you.

This session will last approximately an hour, but if there is more you would like to share with us after the session, we will be glad to stay as long as you need.

To ensure that everyone has an opportunity to tell about their experiences openly, there are some focus group ground rules.

- **We are looking for a range of experience, rather than consensus.**
- **If you agree strongly with a statement, say so.**
- **If your experience is different, describe your experience or perception.**
- **Do not disagree or put down others.**
- **Let others finish what they are saying before responding.**
- **Once again, this should be a conversation among you.**

We are pleased that you have taken the time to share your experiences with us Does anyone have any questions before we begin.

FRC Integration Focus Group Protocol
Parents

Participation and Integration

1. Parents introduce themselves and their family and answer the following question.
   - How did you hear about the Family Resource Center?

2. What services/activities have you and your family participated in?
   - For how long?
   - How has your use of services changed over time?
   - How has participating in one service/activity led to participation in others?

3. What is it about the FRC that encourages you to participate in its activities or programs?
   - Is there anything beyond the services that the FRC provides that brings you to the FRC? If yes, what is it?

4. What, if anything, discourages you from participating in some FRC activities or programs?
   - schedule
   - location
   - transportation
   - type of programs offered
   - staff

Impact and Integration

5. Why is it important to have FRC programs/activities in one location?
   - In the school?
   - Are there any disadvantages?

6. In what ways has the FRC helped you and your children?
   - education/school/learning
   - work
   - family
   - social connections/friends
   - safety

7. How has the FRC changed your involvement in school or community activities?
   - more involvement
   - different type of involvement
   - more comfortable/self confident

8. How has the economy in your community affected how the FRC is used?
   - availability of jobs
   - changes in the welfare system
   - social services/resources available in the community

9. Are there other services you would like to see the FRC provide?

10. What do you like best about the Family Resource Center?

Collaboration Focus Group Questions Protocol

1. How does your agency work with the FRC in general? characteristics, range of activities

2. What are the effects of the collaboration? How do you know it? What works well? What doesn't work?

3. What are the challenges?

4. What is needed to strengthen the collaborative relationships? What has happened in the past? What will you do in the following year?

U.S. Department of Education
Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI)
National Library of Education (NLE)
Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)

REPRODUCTION RELEASE

(Specific Document)

I. DOCUMENT IDENTIFICATION:

Title: Outside Evaluation of Connecticut's Family Resource Centers, Final Report. Vols. I and II.	
Author(s):	
Corporate Source: Connecticut State Department of Education	Publication Date:

II. REPRODUCTION RELEASE:

In order to disseminate as widely as possible timely and significant materials of interest to the educational community, documents announced in the monthly abstract journal of the ERIC system, *Resources in Education* (RIE), are usually made available to users in microfiche, reproduced paper copy, and electronic media, and sold through the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). Credit is given to the source of each document, and, if reproduction release is granted, one of the following notices is affixed to the document.

If permission is granted to reproduce and disseminate the identified document, please CHECK ONE of the following three options and sign at the bottom of the page.

The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 1 documents

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Sample

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

1

Level 1

↑

X

Check here for Level 1 release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche or other ERIC archival media (e.g., electronic) *and* paper copy.

The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 2A documents

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE, AND IN ELECTRONIC MEDIA FOR ERIC COLLECTION SUBSCRIBERS ONLY, HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Sample

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

2A

Level 2A

↑

Check here for Level 2A release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche and in electronic media for ERIC archival collection subscribers only

The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 2B documents

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE ONLY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Sample

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

2B

Level 2B

↑

Check here for Level 2B release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche only

Documents will be processed as indicated provided reproduction quality permits.
If permission to reproduce is granted, but no box is checked, documents will be processed at Level 1.

I hereby grant to the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) nonexclusive permission to reproduce and disseminate this document as indicated above. Reproduction from the ERIC microfiche or electronic media by persons other than ERIC employees and its system contractors requires permission from the copyright holder. Exception is made for non-profit reproduction by libraries and other service agencies to satisfy information needs of educators in response to discrete inquiries.

Sign here, → please

Signature: Marsha J. Howland	Printed Name/Position/Title: Marsha J. Howland Director of Publicatio	
Organization/Address: Connecticut State Dept. of Education 165 Capitol Ave. Hartford CT 06106	Telephone: 860-566-5754	FAX: 860-566-1253
	E-Mail Address: marsha.howland@po.state.ct.us	Date: Nov. 15, 1999

(over)

III. DOCUMENT AVAILABILITY INFORMATION (FROM NON-ERIC SOURCE):

If permission to reproduce is not granted to ERIC, or, if you wish ERIC to cite the availability of the document from another source, please provide the following information regarding the availability of the document. (ERIC will not announce a document unless it is publicly available, and a dependable source can be specified. Contributors should also be aware that ERIC selection criteria are significantly more stringent for documents that cannot be made available through EDRS.)

Publisher/Distributor:
Address:
Price:

IV. REFERRAL OF ERIC TO COPYRIGHT/REPRODUCTION RIGHTS HOLDER:

If the right to grant this reproduction release is held by someone other than the addressee, please provide the appropriate name and address:

Name:
Address:

V. WHERE TO SEND THIS FORM:

Send this form to the following ERIC Clearinghouse:

Karen E. Smith, Acquisitions Coordinator
ERIC/EECE
Children's Research Center
University of Illinois
51 Gerty Dr.
Champaign, Illinois, U.S.A. 61820-7469

However, if solicited by the ERIC Facility, or if making an unsolicited contribution to ERIC, return this form (and the document being contributed) to:

ERIC Processing and Reference Facility
1100 West Street, 2nd Floor
Laurel, Maryland 20707-3598

Telephone: 301-497-4080
Toll Free: 800-799-3742
FAX: 301-953-0263
e-mail: ericfac@inet.ed.gov
WWW: http://ericfac.piccard.csc.com