

Colorado Family Resource Center Association

Family Pathways & CFSA 2.0 Evaluation
Report

July 1, 2017 – June 30, 2018

Submitted to Family Resource Center Association

September 2018



Family Resource
Center Association

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Acknowledgements: Funding for this report was provided in part by Rose Community Foundation, the Jay & Rose Phillips Family Foundation of Colorado, and Hemera Foundation. FRCA and OMNI thank FRC staff for their time collecting and entering the data that makes this evaluation possible. Finally, OMNI thanks Michael Schiel, Alex Clay, Sara Bayless, and Naomi Randell for their significant contributions to the report.

Executive Summary

The Colorado General Assembly established Family Resource Centers (FRCs) in 1993 as a pilot public-private initiative. The mission of the centers is to provide comprehensive community-based supports for vulnerable families and children with a focus on prevention. In 1998, the Family Resource Center Association (FRCA) was created and it serves as the Family Resource Center State Intermediary. FRCs provide multiple services and supports to families through a philosophy of strengths-based family development. One of the primary goals of FRCA is to support its members to provide effective family support services through program implementation and evaluation support, including advanced analysis of family support data.

KEY FEATURES OF FAMILY RESOURCE CENTERS IN COLORADO

As promoted by the National Network of Family Support, Colorado FRCs follow the Standards of Quality for Family Strengthening and Support¹ to ensure demonstration of high-quality, family-support practices that are aligned with the Principals of Family Support and the Center for the Study of Social Policy's Strengthening Families Protective Factors Framework.² In addition, Colorado FRCs follow the Family Pathways Framework, which outlines three distinct paths of support and associated assessments and data tracking. The Family Pathways Framework is designed to promote responsive service delivery that is appropriately tied to evaluation efforts. Colorado FRCs also implement core components of family development service provision that is aligned with the Family Pathways Framework to ensure best practices are followed consistently across centers. Finally, Colorado FRCs use a common family assessment to track family progress and outcomes, the Colorado Family Support Assessment, Version 2.0 (CFSA 2.0).

In collaboration with its evaluation partner, OMNI Institute (OMNI), FRCA made significant advancements to strengthen the rigor of its outcome evaluation through a collaborative process to revise and test its primary assessment tool, the CFSA 2.0. OMNI led a study examining the consistency of family support workers' ratings on the tool and each domain was determined to have high interrater reliability.³ The tool assesses (a) family well-being across several areas (e.g., employment, housing) that are rated on a scale from 1 (in crisis) to 5 (thriving); (b) five factors that protect against child abuse and neglect (e.g., Family Functioning/Resiliency) using the Protective Factors Survey;⁴ and (c) readiness to change.

This executive summary contains highlights from evaluation findings for families served between July 1st 2017 to June 30th 2018.

¹ <https://nationalfamilysupportnetwork.org/standards/>

² <http://www.cssp.org/reform/strengtheningfamilies>

³ Richmond, M. K., Pampel, F. C., Zarcu, Z., Howey, V., & McChesney, B. (2015). Reliability of the Colorado Family Support Assessment: A self-sufficiency matrix for families. *Research on Social Work Practice*.

⁴ <https://friendsnrc.org/protective-factors-survey>

FRCS SERVED THOUSANDS OF FAMILIES ACROSS COLORADO

- Over 26,600 individuals in just over 13,400 families were served by 27 FRCA-member FRCs.
- FRCs provided over 187,000 services –over 59,100 parenting and over 67,200 basic needs services.
- 3,357 families (25% of families served by FRCs) received Family Development services, including CFSA 2.0 assessment, family support, and goal-setting services.
- 2,054 families (61% of families with a baseline CFSA 2.0 assessment) completed at least one follow-up assessment; 983 (29% of families with a baseline CFSA 2.0 assessment) had more than one follow-up assessment.

FRCS SERVED FAMILIES STRUGGLING WITH ECONOMIC SECURITY

- At center entry, 78% of families screened with at least one unmet need on the Common Screening tool.⁵ About 47% screened with unmet needs in more than one area.
- On the baseline CFSA 2.0, 60% of families had incomes at or below 100% of poverty, which in 2018 equates to \$24,600 for a family of four. Families were also struggling with cash savings, lack of education, lack of employment, increasing debt, and inadequate housing (see side bar).
- Over 30% of families identified housing, employment, income, cash savings and parenting as areas for change. They also indicated high readiness to make changes in these areas.

Baseline Assessment (n= 3,027 to 3,279)

76% of families had no cash savings

In 50% of families, no adult had beyond a high school education

In 49% of families, no adult was employed

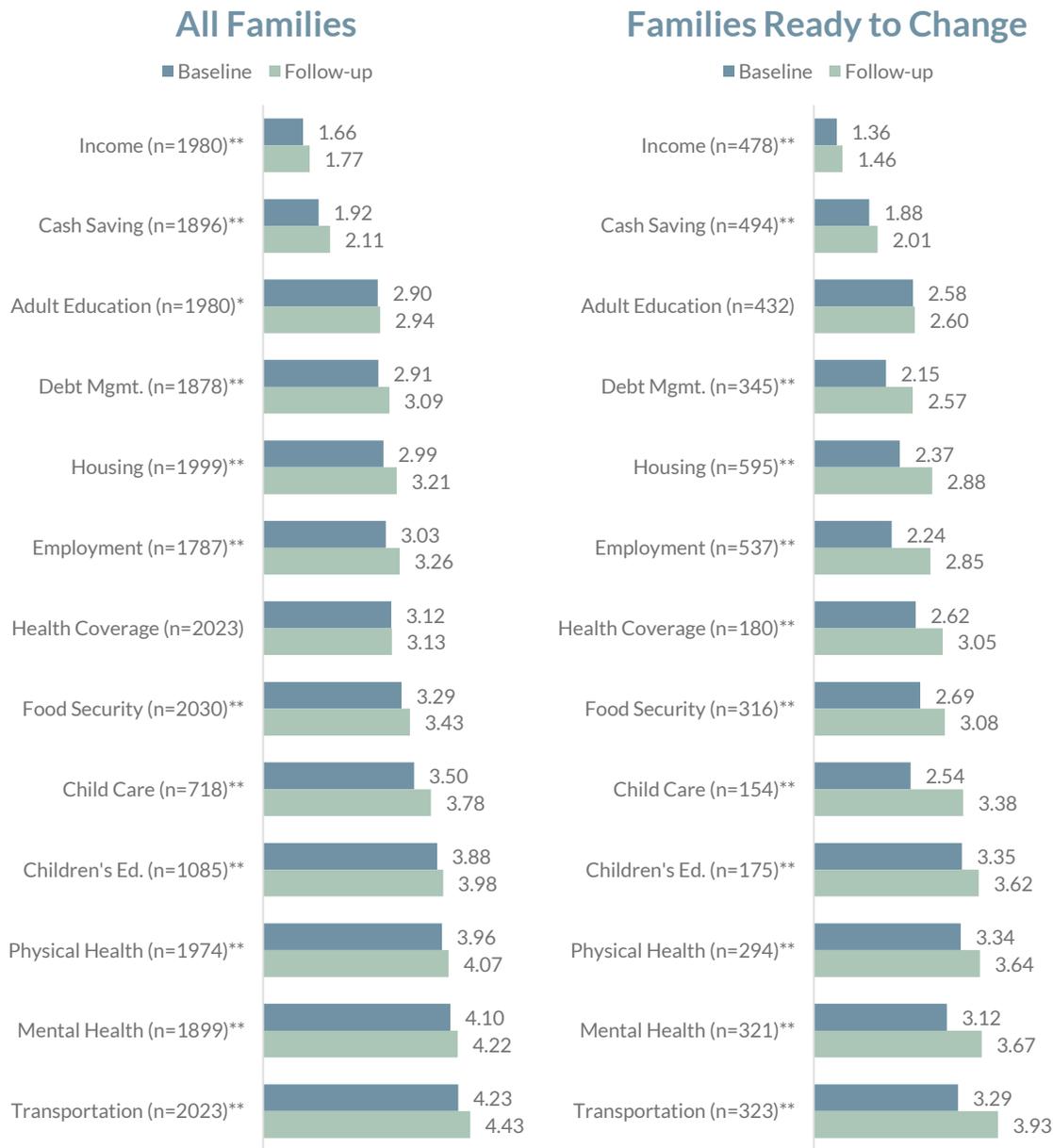
46% of families had increasing debt

42% of families did not have safe, stable or affordable housing

⁵ The Common Screening Tool is administered to families at center entry. It includes eight yes/no items that assess family need in: employment, housing, transportation, food, adult education, health insurance, child care, and children's education.

FAMILIES IMPROVED IN NEARLY ALL CFSA 2.0 DOMAINS

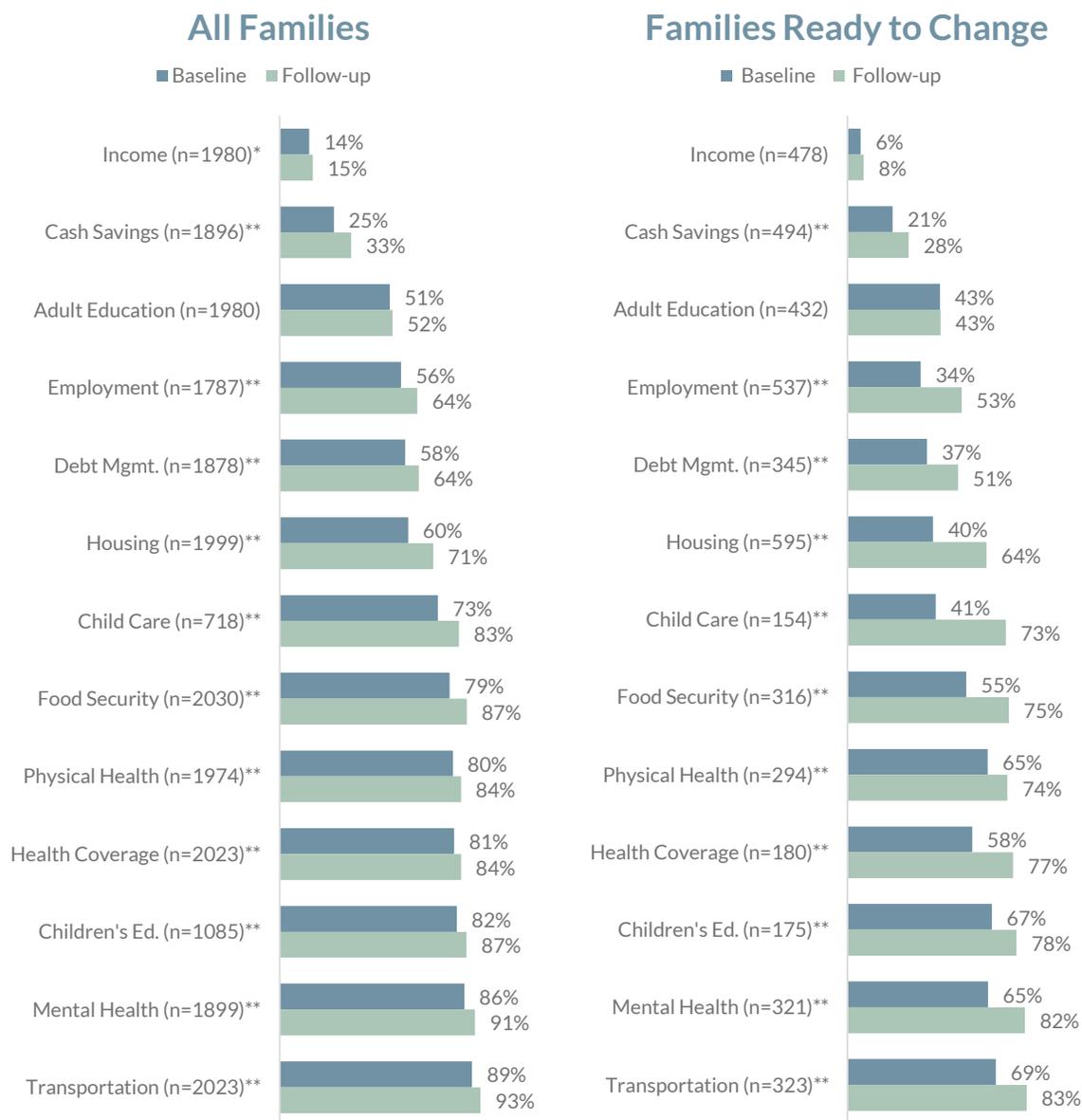
At their most recent follow-up, families showed **statistically significant gains** in income, cash savings, debt management, housing, employment, food security, child care, children’s education, physical health, mental health and transportation. Increases were seen for all families assessed (see figure below, left side) and for those indicating readiness to change in the area (see figure below, right side). This suggests that not only do families targeting areas for change see improvement, but benefits in targeted areas may extend to other domains.



Note. Higher scores indicate higher levels of well-being. Paired samples t-tests. *p<.05, **p<.01.

MORE FAMILIES WERE SAFE, STABLE, OR THRIVING AT FOLLOW-UP

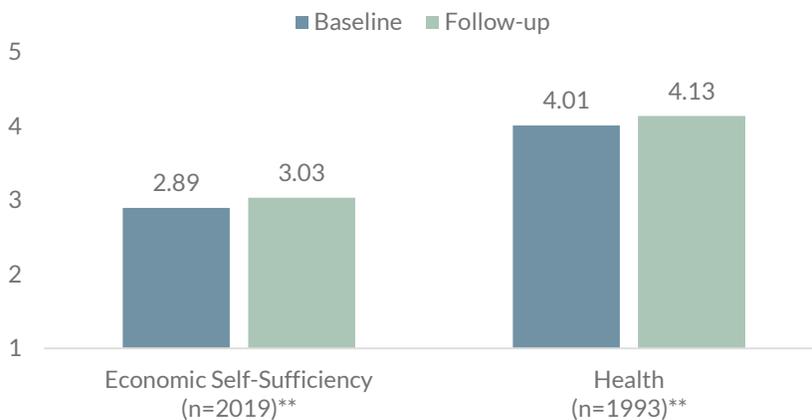
At their most recent follow-up, the percentage of families who indicated a safe, stable, or thriving situation (3 or higher on the CFSA 2.0) was significantly higher in the areas of cash savings, employment, debt management, housing, child care, food security, physical health, health coverage, children’s education, mental health, and transportation. Gains in these areas were seen for all families assessed (see figure below, left side) and for those indicating readiness to change in the area (see figure below, right side). This shows that there was significant movement from **below to above the prevention line** (i.e., movement out of an in-crisis or vulnerable situation to one that is more safe and stable).



Note. Percentage of families scoring above the prevention line on each CFSA 2.0 domain (i.e., a 3 or higher). McNemar’s Test. *p<.05, **p<.01.

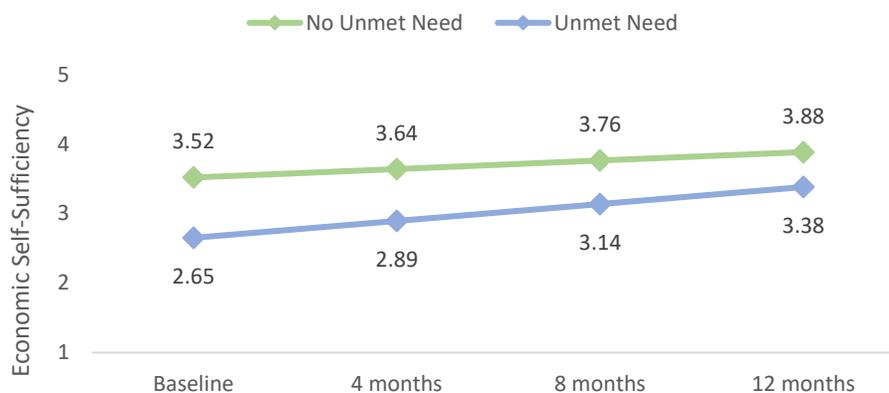
FAMILIES IMPROVED IN ECONOMIC SELF-SUFFICIENCY AND HEALTH

Based on a multiple domain analysis of the CFSA 2.0 assessment, the following subscales were created: Economic Self-Sufficiency (8 items) and Health (2 items). Information on the multiple domain analysis is included in Appendix D of the full report. Overall, families demonstrated statistically significant gains in Economic Self-Sufficiency and Health, indicating that families served by Family Resource Centers were moving towards greater self-sufficiency.



ECONOMIC GROWTH WAS GREATEST FOR FAMILIES IN NEED

A conditional growth model examined changes in Economic Self-Sufficiency for families who screened positive for one or more unmet need at center entry compared to families who did not.⁶



⁶ Unmet need defined as any need identified on the Common Screening Tool administered at center entry.

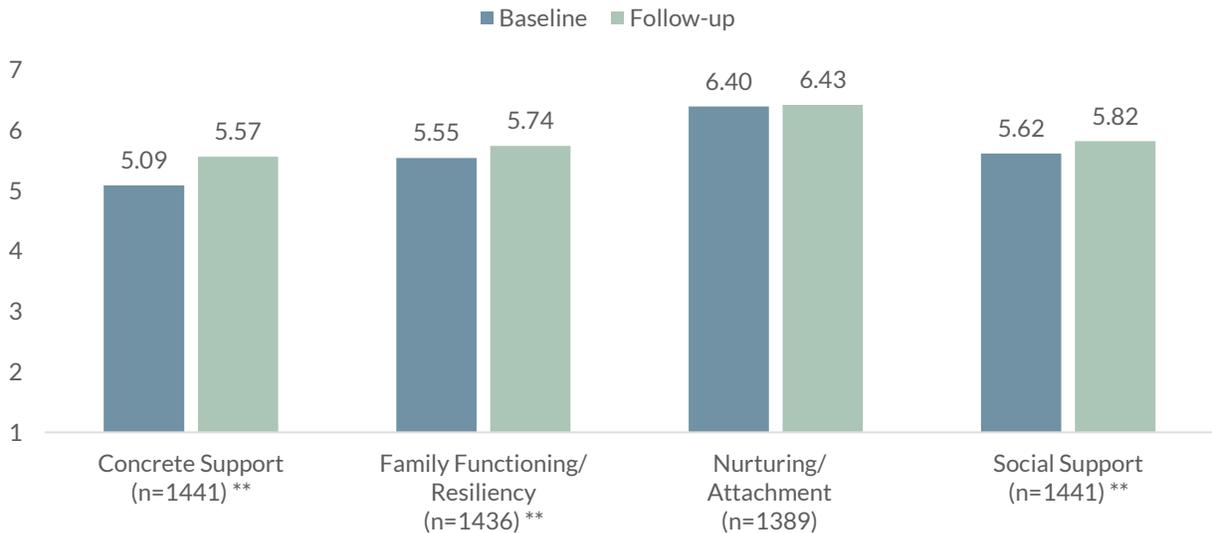
Families with unmet needs had significantly lower Economic Self-Sufficiency at baseline but grew at twice the rate of those who screened without unmet needs.

Conditional growth models also examined whether growth in Economic Self-Sufficiency was different based on whether families received services in the areas of Parenting, Basic Needs, and Adult Education. In these models, families who received at least one service of that type were compared to families who did not receive any services of that type (e.g., families who received one or more service in Basic Needs were compared to families who did not receive any Basic Needs services).

Results showed that in general families grew similarly in Economic Self-Sufficiency regardless of whether they received parenting, basic needs, or adult education services. However, **families who received basic needs and adult education services scored significantly lower at baseline** on Economic Self-Sufficiency than their counterparts who did not receive these services. In contrast, **families who received parenting services scored significantly higher at baseline** in Economic Self-Sufficiency than did families who did not receive parenting services.

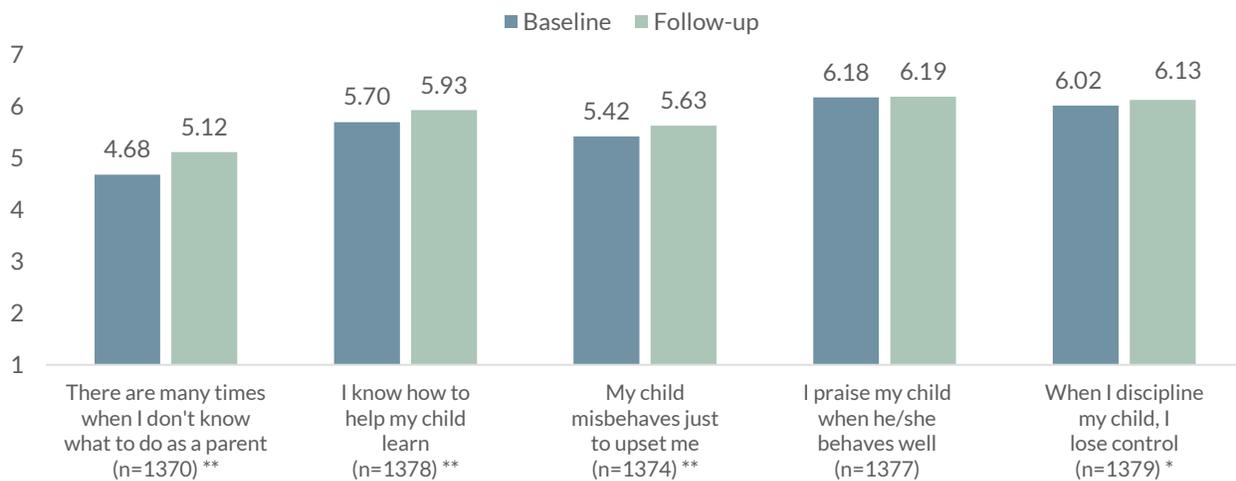
FAMILIES INCREASED PROTECTIVE FACTORS OVER TIME

Families had **significantly higher scores** at follow-up than at baseline **on three protective factors** –Concrete Support, Family Functioning/Resiliency, and Social Support. After receiving services, parents reported increased access to material supports in times of crisis or need; improvements in family problem solving and resiliency; and increased informal, emotional supports. Families **scored high at baseline and at follow-up on Nurturing and Attachment**, indicating this is a key family strength.



Note. Higher scores indicate stronger protective factors. Paired samples t-tests. *p<.05, **p<.01.

Families also demonstrated greater knowledge on 4 of 5 parenting and child development protective factor items from baseline to follow-up, and families maintained high use of praise.



Note. Higher scores indicate stronger protective factors. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$.

CONCLUSIONS

FRCs provided thousands of services to families in Colorado who were experiencing economic hardships and struggling to make ends meet. Results from the 2017-18 evaluation indicated that families served by FRCs through the Family Development path demonstrated improved family well-being.

From baseline to a family's most recent follow-up, families reported better self-sufficiency outcomes. Increases were generally seen among all families assessed as well as in a subsample of families who indicated readiness to change in the area, suggesting that not only do families targeting areas for change see improvement, but benefits in targeted areas may extend to other areas. Further, not only is there incremental change along the continuum in the domains, there is significant movement from below to above the prevention line.

Growth models revealed that families who screened positive in one or more areas of need on the Common Screening tool were lower in Economic Self-Sufficiency at baseline but demonstrated greater growth in Economic Self-Sufficiency over the year than families who did not screen with an unmet need, suggesting that families experiencing unmet needs at center entry may be especially benefitting from Family Development services. Service type was associated with families' Economic Security at center entry but was not associated with growth in Economic Security over the year.

Finally, families increased their protective factors indicating that after receiving services, parents are demonstrating more positive parenting behaviors; strengthened family problem solving and resiliency; increased informal and emotional supports; and increased access to material supports in times of crisis or need.