

Executive Summary: Key Findings on Child Welfare System Outcomes

Community Collaborations to Strengthen and Preserve Families Grant



Project Period: October 1, 2019- September 29, 2024

This evaluation assesses child welfare trends in areas served by the Partnership for Strong Families' Family Resource Centers (FRCs) in Gainesville and Lake City, Florida, focusing on verified maltreatment, out-of-home placements, and outcomes among known FRC patrons.

The population of this study includes families and individuals residing in geographic areas historically associated with high levels of child welfare system involvement—specifically those served by the four Family Resource Centers (FRCs) operated by the Partnership for Strong Families in Gainesville (SWAG, Library Partnership, and Cone Park) and Lake City (NorthStar). Additionally, a targeted sub-group of **245 patrons who received services from these FRCs participated in primary data collection** (March 2021- June 2024), with **169 consenting to a review of their child welfare history** (from 2006- 2024), and **76 of those identified as having past involvement with the Florida Department of Children and Families as alleged perpetrators in maltreatment cases**. The study compared child welfare system involvement before and after each patron's first visit to a FRC. Using the date of initial FRC service and data from the Florida Safe Families Network (FSFN), the evaluation tracked changes over time in key measures—including abuse hotline calls, screened-in investigations, maltreatment allegations, and out-of-home placements—to assess the impact of FRC involvement.

- **Verified Maltreatment Rates:** FRC areas consistently had higher rates of verified maltreatment than non- FRC areas.
- **Out-of-Home Placement Trends:** FRC areas showed higher placement rates compared to non- FRC areas.
- **Child Welfare Outcomes Among Known FRC Patrons-** Among 76 patrons with prior child welfare involvement (with 72 of these 76 having at least one screened in call with at least one investigation involving one child)
 - Significantly statistic reductions were observed post FRC engagement
 - **Abuse hotline calls:** ↓ 50% (2.59 → 1.30 average number of calls per patron)
 - **Screened-in hotline calls:** ↓ 64% (2.18 → 0.78 average number of calls per patron)
 - **Children subject to a maltreatment investigation:** ↓ 62% (4.89 → 1.88 average number of investigations per patron)
 - **Alleged maltreatments investigated (among screened in calls):** ↓ 65% (7.78 → 2.74 average number of allegations per patron)
 - **Out-of-home placements:** ↓ 98.6% (0.71 → 0.01 average removals per patron)
 - Before receiving FRC support, 20 out of 76 patrons had at least one child removal, affecting a total of 51 children.
 - After engaging with FRCs, only 1 patron had a child removed, involving just 1 child.
 - The focus was on how many children had to be removed from their homes in response to a verified safety concern.

Individual-level data collected through this study shows statistically significant and positive impact for patrons engaged with FRCs. These outcomes support the role of FRCs as a promising prevention strategy to strengthen families and reduce future child welfare involvement.



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