

# Colorado Family Resource Center Association

Family Pathways & CFSA 2.0 Evaluation  
Report – Executive Summary  
July 1, 2016 – June 30, 2017

Submitted to Family Resource Center Association

August 2017



Family Resource  
Center Association

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## Family Pathways & CFSA 2.0 Evaluation Report – Executive Summary

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**Acknowledgements:** Funding for this report was provided in part by Rose Community Foundation, Constellation Philanthropy, the Jay & Rose Phillips Family Foundation, and Hemera Foundation.

# 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 Support<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>2</sup> 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.<sup>3</sup> 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;<sup>4</sup> and (c) readiness to change.

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

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

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

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

This executive summary contains highlights from evaluation findings for families served between July 1<sup>st</sup> 2016 to June 30<sup>th</sup> 2017.

## FRCS SERVED THOUSANDS OF INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES ACROSS COLORADO

- Over 30,000 individuals in just under 16,000 families were served by 27 FRCA-member FRCs – over 8,800 individuals in over 3,000 families received services consistent with family development.
- FRCs provided over 246,000 services – nearly 100,000 healthy living services, over 44,000 parenting services, and over 68,000 basic needs services.
- 3,539 families completed a CFSA 2.0 during the reporting window. 3,036 families were new families<sup>5</sup> and included in analyses – 1,583 (52%) of the new families received a follow-up assessment.

## FRCS SERVED VULNERABLE FAMILIES

- At center entry, about 3 out of 4 families screened positive on at least one item on the Common Screening tool.<sup>6</sup> About 45% screened positive in more than one area.
- On the baseline CFSA 2.0, 59% of families had incomes at or below 100% of poverty, which in 2017 equates to \$24,600 for a family of four. More than 40% of families were also struggling with cash savings, lack of education, lack of employment, increasing debt, and inadequate housing.
- On the Protective Factors Scales, families scored the highest on Nurturing and Attachment and lowest on Concrete Support.
- 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= 2,728 to 2,790)

78% of families had no savings

In 49% of families, no adult had beyond a high school education

In 47% of families, no adult was employed

44% of families had increasing debt

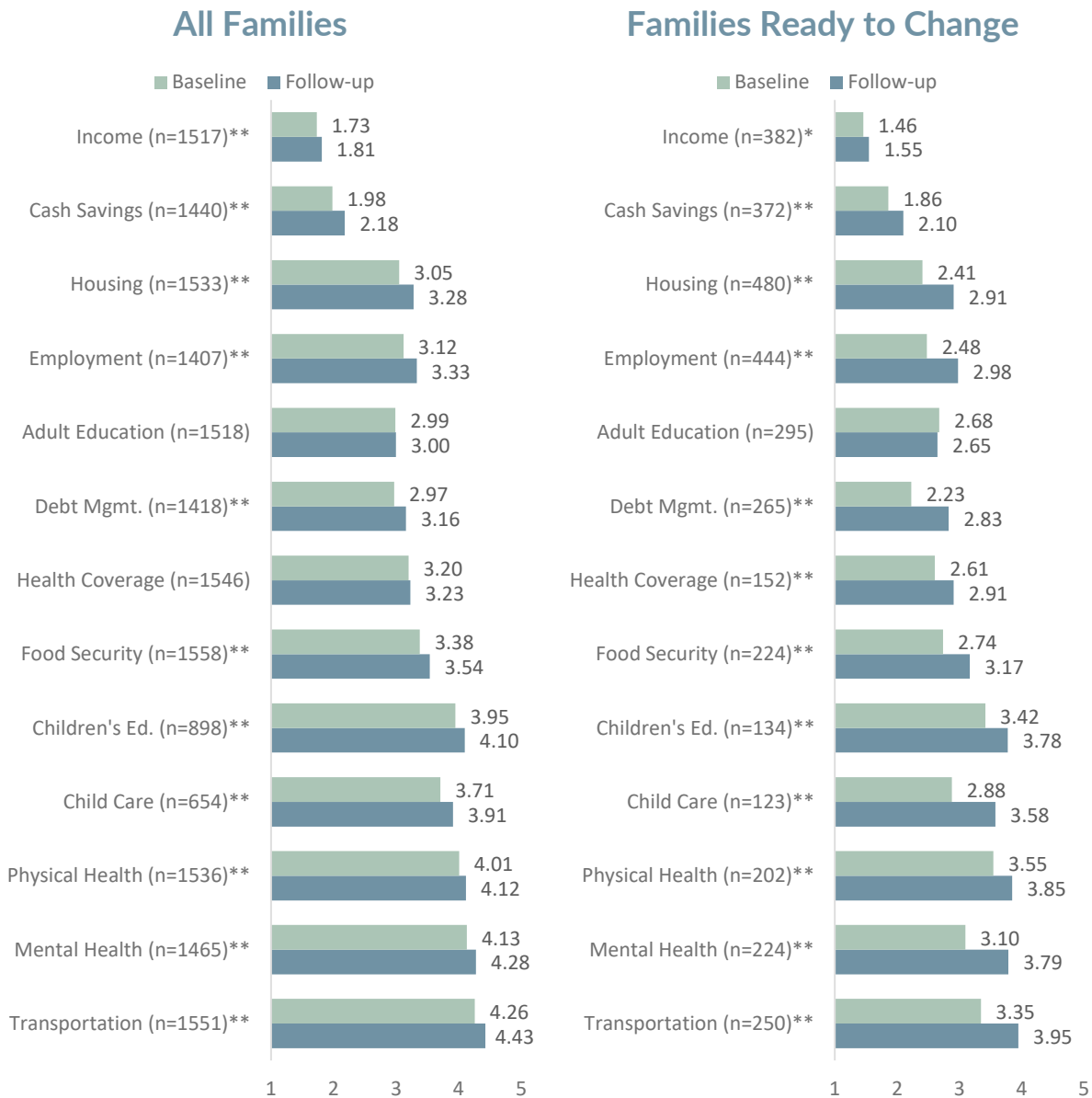
41% of families did not have safe, stable or affordable housing

<sup>5</sup> In July 2015, the CFSA 2.0 replaced a prior version of the tool. Analysis of baseline data and changes in family well-being were conducted only for families who had not been administered the prior CFSA.

<sup>6</sup> 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

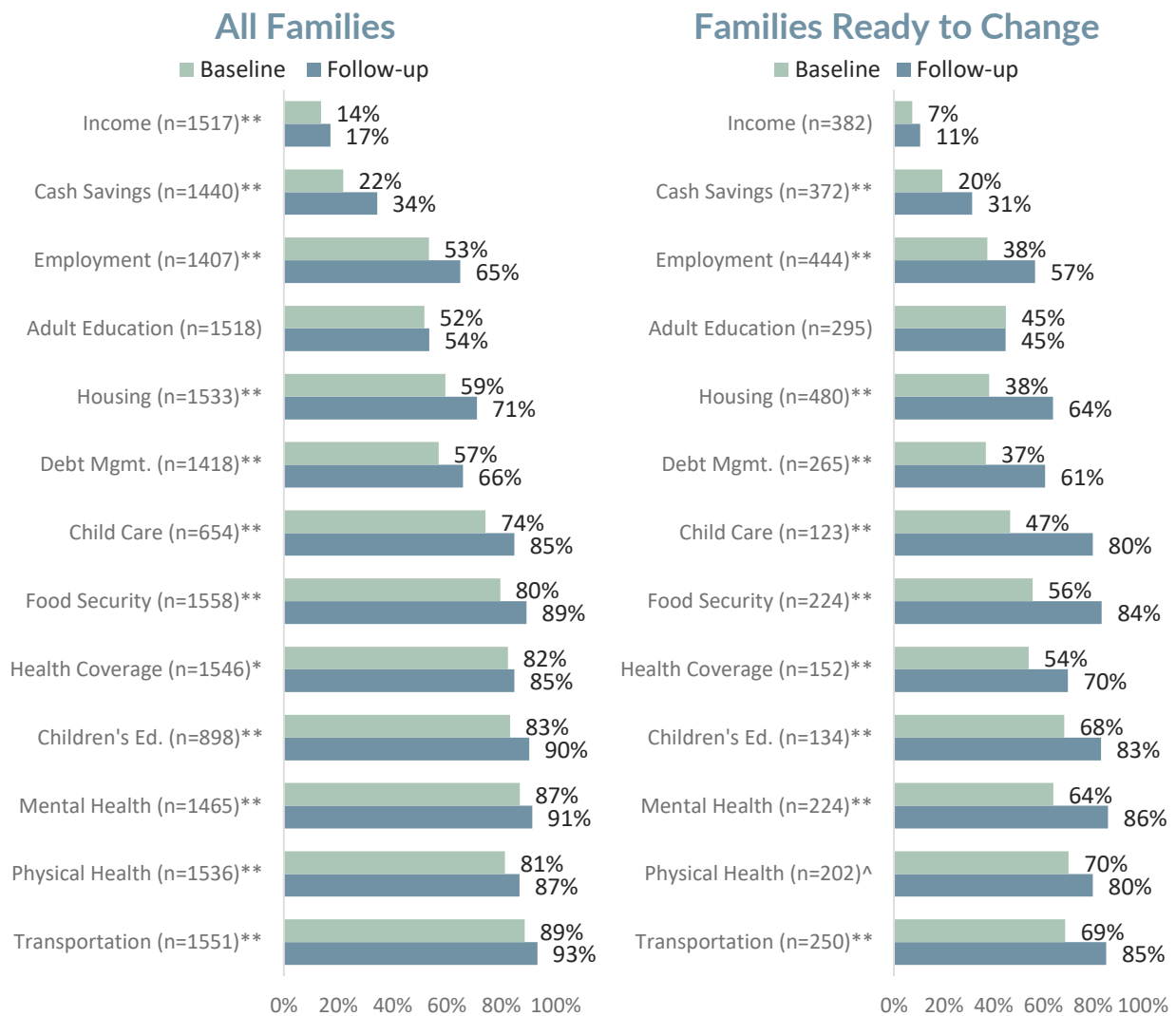
At their most recent follow-up, families showed **statistically significant gains** on income, cash savings, housing, employment, debt management, food security, children’s education, child care, physical health, mental health and transportation. Mean score increases in these areas were seen for all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



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

## MORE FAMILIES BECAME SAFE, STABLE, OR THRIVING ON MOST CFSA 2.0 DOMAINS OVER TIME

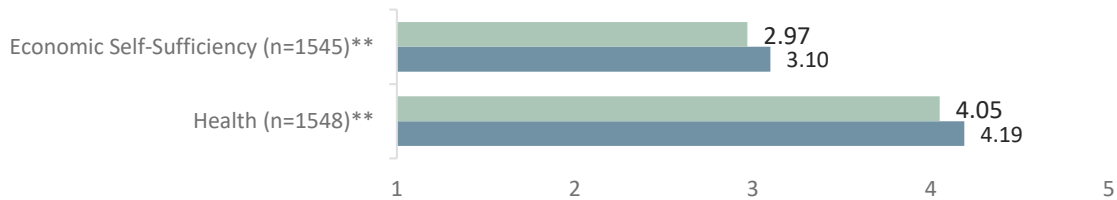
At their most recent follow-up, **the percentage of families who indicated a safe, stable, or thriving situation (3 or higher on the CFSA 2.0) was significantly higher** in the areas of cash savings, employment, housing, debt management, child care, food security, health coverage, children’s education, mental health, physical 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).



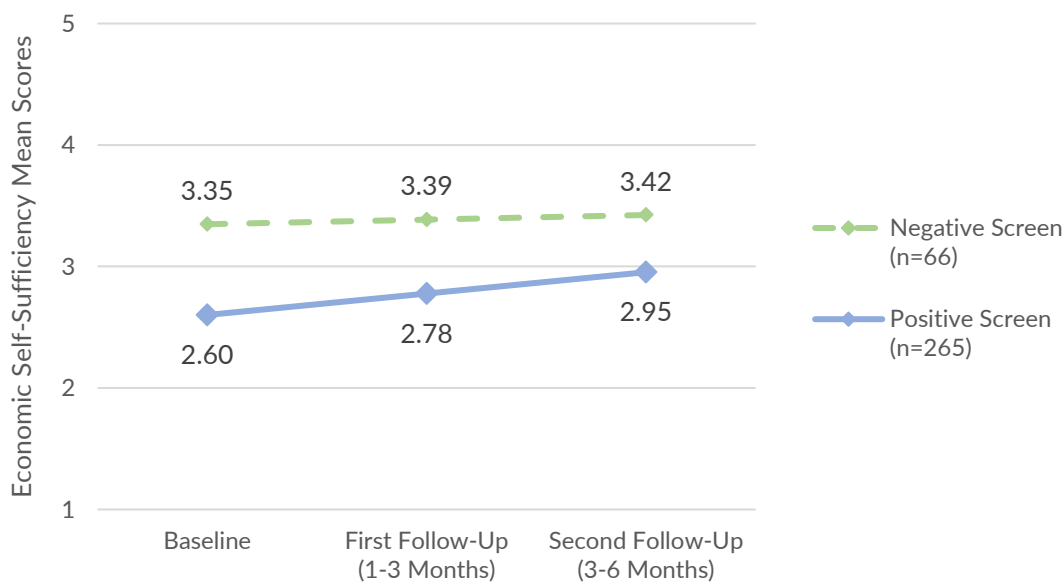
Note. Percentage of families scoring above the prevention line on each CFSA 2.0 domain (i.e., a 3 or higher). McNemar’s Test. ^p<.10, \*p<.05, \*\*p<.01.

## 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. Examining mean change in the scales from baseline to the most recent follow-up, 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.

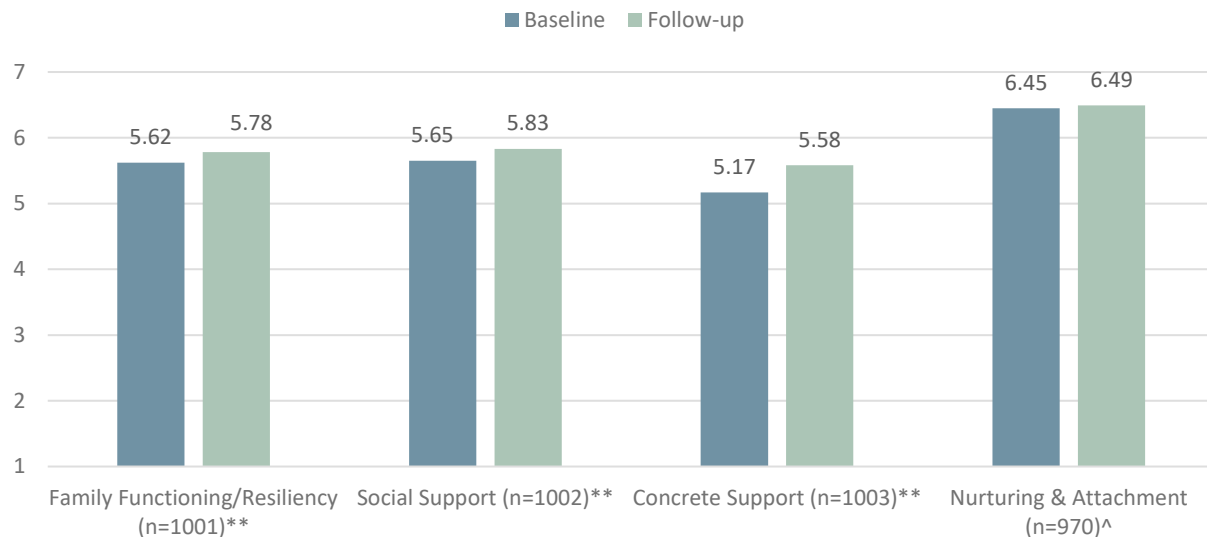


Additional analyses were conducted on a subset of families to examine whether family screening results (i.e., positive or negative screen) at center entry predicted growth in economic self-sufficiency. Families were coded as a positive screen when they indicated a high-need situation in one or more areas on the Common Screening tool (e.g., lack of stable housing). Families were coded as a negative screen when they did not indicate a high-need situation in any area on the Common Screening tool. Results indicated that families screening positive at center entry had lower scores in Economic Self-Sufficiency at baseline, but demonstrated greater growth in Economic Self-Sufficiency in the first six months than individuals screening negative (see figure below).



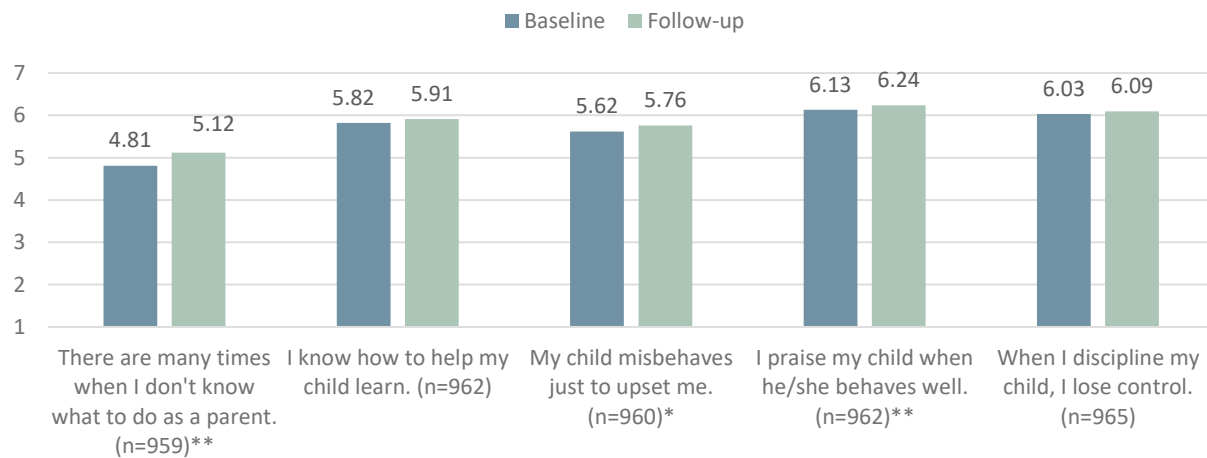
## FAMILIES IMPROVED IN MOST PROTECTIVE FACTORS OVER TIME

Families had **significantly higher scores** at follow-up than at baseline **on three protective factors** – Family Functioning/Resiliency, Social Support, and Concrete Support. Families also marginally increased their scores on Nurturing and Attachment from baseline to follow-up. As such, after receiving services, parents reported improvements in family problem solving and resiliency; increased informal, emotional supports; and increased access to material supports in times of crisis or need.



Note. Higher scores indicate stronger protective factors. Paired samples t-tests. ^p<.10, \*p<.05, \*\*p<.01.

Families also demonstrated greater knowledge on 3 of 5 parenting and child development protective factor items from baseline to follow-up.



Note. Higher scores indicate stronger protective factors. ^p<.10, \*p<.05, \*\*p<.01



## CONCLUSIONS

Overall, evaluation findings suggest that FRCs served vulnerable Colorado families who showed improved outcomes in most indicators of family well-being.

From baseline to follow-up, families reported better outcomes in the areas of income, cash savings, housing, employment, debt management, food security, children's education, child care, physical health, mental health and transportation. Mean score increases in these domains were seen among a sample of all families, as well as a subsample of families indicating readiness to change in that area.

- This suggests that not only do families targeting areas for change see improvement, but benefits in targeted areas may extend to other areas.

From baseline to follow-up, the percentage of families who indicated a safe, stable, or thriving situation increased significantly on most CFSA 2.0 domains. Gains in these areas were seen for all families assessed and for those indicating readiness to change in the area.

- 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).

From baseline to follow-up, families not only increased their scores on three of four protective factors, but also on three of five parenting and child development protective factor items.

- This suggests that, after receiving services, parents reported improvements in positive parenting behaviors; their family problem solving and resiliency; increased informal, emotional supports; and increased access to material supports in times of crisis or need.

From baseline to follow-up, families significantly increased their scores on both subscales of the CFSA 2.0: Economic Self-Sufficiency and Health. Additional analyses on a subset of families 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 demonstrate greater growth in Economic Self-Sufficiency in the first six months than individuals with a negative screen.

- This suggests that families experiencing high levels of need at center entry may be especially benefitting from family development services.