

WI FRC Best Practice Model



WI FAMILY RESOURCE CENTERS: Best Practice Model

PREFACE

The Family Resource Center (FRC) Model for best practice outlines the role, foundational principles, and structure of FRCs in Wisconsin. The standards outlined in this document align with the requirements for attaining accreditation as a Wisconsin Family Resource Center of Quality and with the principles espoused by the Supporting Families Together Association Family Resource Center Network.

INTRODUCTION

FRCs serve as community hubs for family support by promoting child, family, and community strengths; building parenting skills; and providing access to community resources. Research has shown that children are more likely to thrive when they live in safe, stable, nurturing environments

and in families that have the support and opportunities they need to thrive. FRCs seek to offer programs, services, and supports to families which promote child well-being and reduce risk factors for child maltreatment.

FRCs are an integral partner in comprehensive, community-based family support systems and are centered on children and parents. Within this document parents are defined as anyone with primary caregiving responsibility for a child. FRCs provide natural family supports, link families to complimentary community-based services, and serve as a referral source for more intensive or targeted services. FRCs offer programs and services that have been shown to reduce risk factors for negative outcomes for children and actively

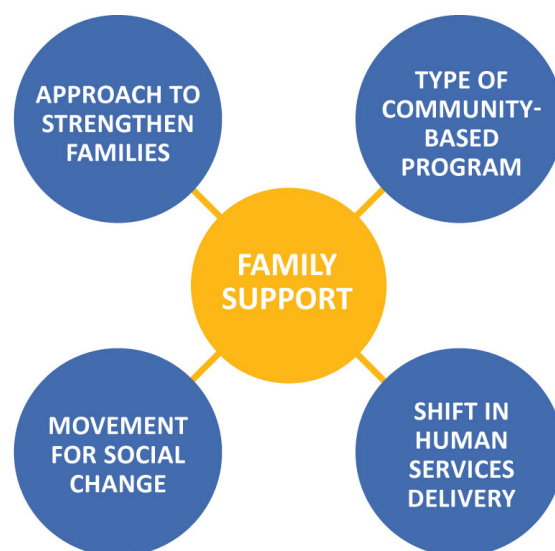
promote positive child outcomes. They provide services universally to all families within their geographical area, regardless of their level of risk, as well as some that are targeted to families experiencing specific risk factors. FRCs focus on primary prevention, which addresses the root causes of adversity and underlying factors to avert child maltreatment prior to occurrence and build protective factors which buffer against adversity and promote positive growth of children.

FAMILY SUPPORT PERSPECTIVE

FRCs are characterized by their shared family support perspective. According to the National Family Support Network, Family Support America defined the concept of Family Support as (See Figure 1):

- A set of beliefs and an approach to strengthening and empowering families and communities to support the needs and development of the entire family system, including children, youth, and adult family members.
- A shift in human services delivery that encourages public and private agencies to work together and to become more preventive, responsive, flexible, family-focused, strength-based, and holistic, and thus more effective.
- A type of community-based program designed to prevent family problems by strengthening parent-child relationships and providing what parents need in order to be good nurturers and providers.
- A movement for change in social norms that holds all community members -policymakers, program providers, parents, employers-responsible for improving the lives of children and families. The family support movement strives to transform our society into caring communities that put children and families first and that ensure that all children and families get what they need to succeed.

Figure 1. Elements of Family Support



UNIFYING PRINCIPLES

FRCs exist in many settings, vary in configuration, and provide a variety of services. Though they are as unique as the families and communities they serve, they do share unifying principles which define their approach to families, community, staff, and service provision.

THE 9 PRINCIPLES OF FAMILY SUPPORT

The Standards of Quality for Family Strengthening and Support (National Standards) are designed to be used by stakeholders as a tool for planning, providing, and assessing quality practice with the intent to ensure that families are supported and strengthened through this quality practice. These Nine Principles of family Support, which were originally developed by Family Support America, have been incorporated into the National Standards:

1. Staff and families work together in relationships based on equality and respect.
2. Staff enhance families' capacity to support the growth and development of all family members—adults, youth, and children.
3. Families are viewed as resources to their own members, to other families, to programs, and to communities.
4. FRCs seek to affirm and strengthen families' cultural, racial, and linguistic identities and support their ability to thrive in a multicultural society.
5. FRCs are embedded in their communities and contribute to the community-building process.
6. FRCs advocate with families for services and systems that are fair, responsive, and accountable to the families they serve.
7. FRCs work with families to mobilize formal and informal resources to support family development.
8. FRCs are flexible and continually responsive to merging family and community issues.
9. Principles of family support are modeled in all program activities, including planning, governance, and administration.

Adopted from Family Support America, 1997-2002, 20 N. Wacker Drive, Suite 1100, Chicago, IL 60606



WISCONSIN FAMILY SUPPORT PRINCIPLES

In addition to the National Standards, Wisconsin has developed principles that align FRCs within the state:

- FRCs have a strengths-based orientation and take a strengths-based approach to families, services, staff, and community.
- FRCs provide universal services in a non-stigmatizing way to all families within a target geographic area
- The central focus and orientation of FRCs is primary prevention with links to secondary and tertiary services and service providers, based on family need.
- FRCs seek to prevent child maltreatment and promote the optimal development of children. They strive to help families build upon the five Protective Factors.
- Programs and services are community-based, selected, and tailored according to local needs, and designed to prevent family challenges by strengthening parent-child relationships and supporting parents to be nurturing caregivers and providers.

- FRCs utilize resources that have the highest level of available evidence of effectiveness for families, including evidence-based and evidence-informed programming and approaches.
- FRC services are voluntary and at the discretion of the caregiver(s).
- FRCs foster parent leadership and incorporate parent voice.
- FRCs attend to the unique contributions and roles of mothers and fathers and other caregivers, as well as the variety of configurations of families.
- FRCs are conscious of the need to attend to diversity, equity, and inclusion within all aspects of their internal dynamics, their relationships with and services for families, and their interaction with the community.

Figure 2. Family Resource Center Infrastructure Model



UNIFORM STANDARDS

While FRCs provide access to a comprehensive and multi-disciplinary range of voluntary parent education and support services, the specific services offered at each community-based agency are determined by local community needs and vary from one agency to another. However, unifying standards ensure that families accessing supports are receiving high quality services (See Figure 2).

A unified FRC infrastructure helps ensure that families who utilize FRCs can expect the same approach to and quality of services throughout Wisconsin, though the individual offerings are unique to the area in which each FRC is embedded. This common infrastructure also supports the development and expansion of FRCs into unserved areas, providing a framework and process from which to begin the work, tap into mentoring support, and build effectiveness from the onset. It enhances the ability of FRCs to collaborate and learn from one another, supports workforce development, and provides the ability to create an evaluation process across FRCs that can demonstrate the benefits to families, communities, and businesses of the FRC network as a system.

The development of a strong FRC network provides the opportunity to promote awareness of FRCs throughout the state, including their defining characteristics, how they differ from other entities, their benefits, and their locations. Building a strong network, demonstrating uniform standards, creating a continuous quality improvement process, and showing strong evaluation results provides FRCs with more leverage to advocate for policies and dedicated funding that supports their efforts.

INTEGRATION OF THE PROTECTIVE FACTORS FRAMEWORK

All families face challenges. It is extremely difficult to predict whether or how threats to child and family well-being will occur within a specific family, even when associated risk factors are present. Research has demonstrated that building protective factors broadly and supporting positive childhood experiences and relationships is more effective than trying to identify them just prior to onset or addressing them after the fact. Therefore, prevention approaches that strengthen Protective Factors broadly are most likely to be effective in reducing maltreatment. The Strengthening Families™ Protective Factors Framework is an evidence-informed, strengths-based approach to child maltreatment prevention and family well-being promotion developed by the Center for the Study of Social Policy (CSSP). It identifies five key Protective Factors that increase family strength, promote optimal child development, and reduce the likelihood of child abuse and neglect.

The Strengthening Families™ Protective Factors Framework is foundational to the work of FRCs. The Five Protective Factors strengthen the roots of family well being and provide a common language to talk about family strength. Understanding their own Protective Factors also helps FRC employees to remain a healthy workforce.

In order to be most effective the five Protective Factors need to be integrated into all aspects of the work of the FRC. Effective FRCs incorporate the following (See Figure 3):

- Integrate of the Five Protective Factors at all levels of the organization

including programming, services, parent interactions, communications, staff development, and supervision. The Strengthening Families Community Based Program Self-Assessment guides action planning and implementation.

- Participation of all staff in the Bringing the Protective Factors Framework to Life in Your Work professional development training.
- Allocation of FRC staff time to coordinate Protective Factors integration, overseeing protective factors implementation, activities and communication for parents, staff, and surrounding community.
- Education of parents about Protective Factors. Helping caregivers to identify and build upon their own family protective factors using the Five for Families parent curriculum, Parent Cafes, shared leadership opportunities, and clarifying the intersections with other program offerings.
- Promotion of public awareness of the Protective Factors within the FRC, the surrounding community, with parents who are not involved in the FRC, and among other family serving organizations and staff using the Five for Families campaign materials and website.

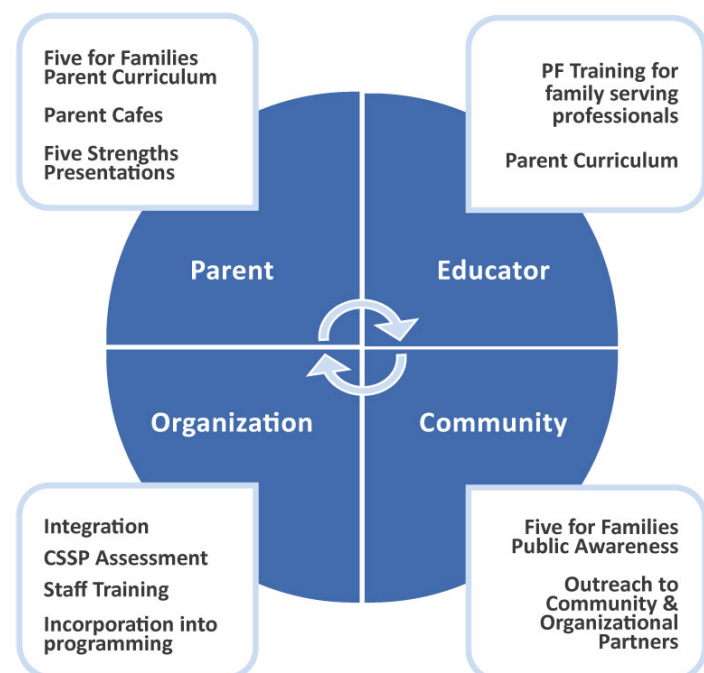
STANDARDS OF QUALITY FOR FAMILY STRENGTHENING AND SUPPORT

The National Family Support Network's Standards of Quality for Family Strengthening and Support are designed to be used by Family Support programs as a tool for planning, providing, and assessing quality practice. They create uniform language and expectations in the Family Support and Strengthening field across different kinds of programs and services. These standards

are also fully aligned with the Strengthen Families™ Protective Factors Framework. The National Standards ensure that programs within agencies focus on family centeredness; family strengthening; diversity, equity, and inclusion; community strengthening; and evaluation when providing services.

To apply these standards, FRC staff must be trained to assess and implement them. A training team from Supporting Families Together Association and the Wisconsin Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Board is certified to offer this training to FRCs in Wisconsin.

Figure 3. Protective Factors Integration





CORE COMPETENCIES FOR FAMILY SERVING PROFESSIONALS

The Wisconsin Core Competencies for Family Serving Professionals serve as a foundation to foster family serving professionals' expertise and guide professional development. These core competencies can support agencies in fostering workforce development and alignment with professional development offerings for onboarding and ongoing professional development so that employees have uniform standards across FRCs. The core competencies serve as a resource to:

- Establish state level recommendations for expectations for trainings and knowledge at increments of employment time
- Guide hiring, performance evaluation, and professional development of employees within FRCs
- Increase FRC network capacity to provide training and technical assistance
- Expand professional development opportunities available to FRCs

PARENT VOICE AND LEADERSHIP

Parents and caregivers are the guardians of their own family strengths and needs. According to the Standards of Quality for Family Strengthening and Support, parents are significant resources for their own family members and others. Families should be involved in the planning, development, and implementation of FRC programming and services. Services, activities, and approaches should be developed in response to the interest and needs of families. FRCs need to dedicate effort, time, resources, and planning to support parent leadership and incorporate family voice including the following:

- Allocating a portion of one or more staff member's FTE to developing and sustaining parent leadership and voice within the organization and to helping other staff members to integrate parent partnership and voice into their own interactions with parents
- Including parent collaboration and leadership development into the work responsibilities of all staff who interact directly with parents
- Requiring staff participation in training to develop and sustain a structured, parent-led advisory process or group, as well as other opportunities for parent leadership and engagement
- Developing and implementing an outreach, recruitment, and retention plan for parents and caregivers
- Allocating time, money and effort to ensuring equitable representation and an inclusive environment for diverse or underrepresented parents and families
- Establishing a process for parent and participant involvement in leadership and policy

- Participating in in the Supporting Families Together Association Parent Leadership Training and Community of Practice

FRC CORE SERVICES

While there is variation in the specific programs and services offered by individual FRCs, there is uniformity in the five core categories of services offered (See Figure 4). These core services support child and family well-being, strengthen protective factors, and mitigate known risk

factors for child maltreatment. FRCs in Wisconsin provide programs and services that fall within these five categories: parenting supports, child development activities, resource and navigation supports, parent leadership development and community engagement.

It is important for FRCs to have a distribution of offerings within and across each of the core services. FRCs should seek to ensure that a spectrum of offerings from all five core services are available to parents within their own service array and in collaboration with other partners.

Figure 4. Family Resource Center Core Services



PARENTING SUPPORTS

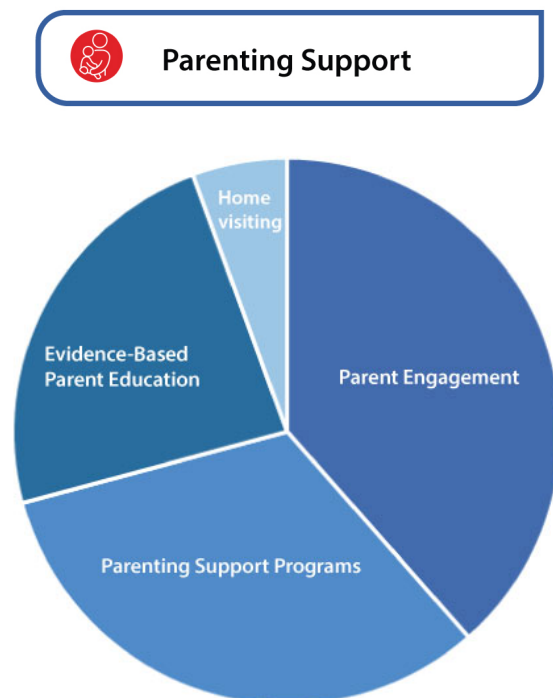
Parenting supports are services designed to provide parents with opportunities, knowledge, resources, and strategies to bolster their parenting skills and enhance the quality of their interactions and relationships with their children. This core service is often thought of as synonymous with parent education, which is an important aspect of the core service. However, there are other valuable parenting support offerings that, when used in tandem with parent education, meet a full array of parenting needs and allow FRCs to match the correct type and intensity of service to the specific needs of caregivers.

Parenting Supports are predominantly primary prevention programs and services offered universally to all parents in the FRC service area, though many FRCs do also offer secondary and even tertiary programming. Parenting Supports are strengths-based, promote protective factors and reduce risk for child maltreatment. Established FRCs identify four classifications of parenting support of increasing intensity (See Figure 5): parent engagement, parenting support programs, evidence-based parent education and home visiting.

PARENT ENGAGEMENT

Parent engagement consists of positive, light touch activities and services. They are short-term and often entertaining with the goal of meeting families' immediate needs and encouraging them to return. Parent Engagement activities are designed to be welcoming to families, introduce them to staff, and build their comfort level with the FRC. It is also an opportunity for staff to build awareness of other activities and services and familiarize families with what the FRC has available for them.

Figure 5.



Programs and Services are universal, strengths-based, promote protective factors and reduce risk for child maltreatment



HOME VISITING

Home visiting matches expectant or new primary caregivers with a support person (usually a parent educator, early childhood specialist, nurse, or social worker), who guides them through the stages of raising a family through the early years. Home visiting services are offered at differing intervals between the prenatal period and age five, depending on the goals of the home visiting program. Services are home-based and offered one on one.

For a home-visiting program to be classified as primary prevention, it must be offered to an entire group of parents, universally, without regard to their level of risk factors. Many evidence-based home visiting programs are longer-term (two or more years), and deliberately structured - with specified qualifications for the service provider, a prescribed curriculum, intensive training, and tailored assessments. Because this type of programming is expensive to implement, caregivers with higher needs are most often targeted with the result that evidence-based home visiting is most often offered as secondary prevention for a selective audience possessing identified risk factors.

PROGRAMMING FOR TEENS, SCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES

Some FRCs consider the provision of high-quality programming for teens or school-age children and their caregivers an important component of FRC parenting support services. There may be few resources that provide this type of programming in their community. Families with young children often have older siblings for which they need parenting support. Foundational Parenting Support Activities, Programs and Services

FOUNDATIONAL PARENTING SUPPORT ACTIVITIES, PROGRAMS, AND SERVICES

Wisconsin FRC leadership identified what they believed to be the foundational activities, services, and programs to offer in each of the Parenting Support categories (Figure 6.). FRCs who do not have the capacity to provide these foundational services from each of the parenting support categories should strive to make that their goal. It is not essential to offer every one of these services as the needs of caregivers and the presence of other service providers varies from community to community. It is vital to make informed choices and to offer programming across the spectrum in each of the categories or to collaborate with other organizations to offer services from other categories. It is also important to partner with organizations to which an FRC can refer families to more intensive secondary and tertiary services, if they are available in the community, unless they are also available within the FRC.

Figure 6.

Foundational Parenting Support Activities, Programs and Services**			
Parent Engagement	Parenting Support Programs	Evidence-Based Parent Education	Home Visiting*
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Referral to other services • Concrete Supports (Incl. diapers and other infant toddler items) • Family Fun and Community • Outreach Events Promotion, marketing and information sharing • Parenting warmline • ASQ Assessment • Educational Events • Parent-Child Workshops 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent Cafés • Five for Families Curriculum • Triple P (Seminars, L3 Discussion Groups, Informed Workshops) • Parent Support Groups for a specific sub-group • Play Group • Father specific programming • Newborn/infant programs • Co-parenting classes • FAST early childhood 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Period of Purple Crying • Triple P (Primary care and L4) • Stewards of Children • Nurturing Parenting Program • Newborn Behavioral Observation • 24/7 Dad 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents as Teachers • Healthy Families America • Early Head Start

**This is not an exhaustive listing. It is the types of services and programming currently being offered by FRCs in Wisconsin that those FRCs consider foundational to their functioning.

*Home visiting is not necessarily foundational programming for an FRC as, in many communities, it is available through other agencies. In that case, the FRC serves as an important source of referrals for the home visiting program(s).

Families benefit from an array of parent education opportunities that address differences in preferences, formats, time constraints and availability and they have different levels of need at different times in their parenting journey. This amount of variety can be challenging to implement and deliver. FRCs address this complexity with strategies such as providing localized services to families in multiple communities across a region and referring families to complimentary community services where

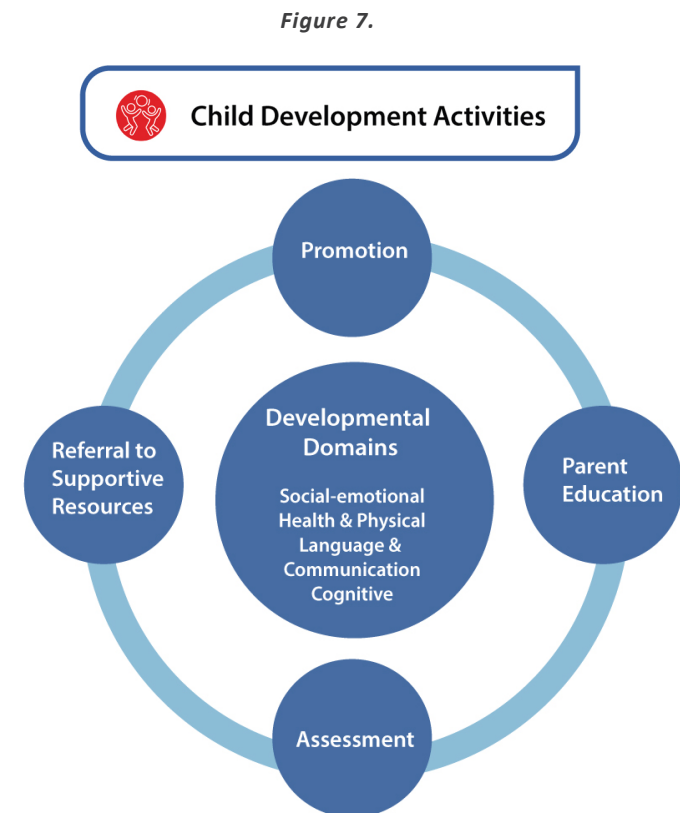
families can be matched with the intensity of services tailored to their level of need. As a practical matter, options for programs and services are frequently dictated by available funding and the expectation of funders. However, even with these constraints there is often opportunity to choose from a menu of programs and to align services with partnering organizations' quality program offerings to ensure a full spectrum. In determining selection criteria, it is useful to consider a balance of the following characteristics.

SELECTION CRITERIA

- Level of Evidence of Quality
- Needs of the Parent Population
- Community Needs
- Targeted Outcomes
- Ethnic and/or cultural adaptation or relevance for intended audience
- Targeted Audience
- Format
- Dosage
- Partnering Systems or Sites

CHILD DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

One role of FRCs is to provide activities, resources and services that incorporate the five domains of child development: social and emotional development, health and physical development (including fine and gross motor skills), language and communication, cognition and intellect and approaches to learning ². FRCs take a two generational approach by equipping families to support development of these domains while interacting with their children. They do this in four ways (See Figure 7). They promote the importance of these domains by sharing knowledge in family friendly ways in the midst of activities and in places that families already frequent. They provide specific parent education and information sharing opportunities including programming that incorporates developmental information, newsletters, parent cafes and through social media. They encourage parents to have their child screened for their developmental progress and provide assessments themselves or partner with other organizations to provide them for parents.



When a development delay or need is detected, they provide referral to supportive resources such as Birth to Three, behavioral health services, specialized health care, and special needs services. Often, they also provide activities tailored to children with special needs and their parents.

²Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. (2017). Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards. https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/early-childhood/wmels_5theditionfinal.pdf.

RESOURCE AND NAVIGATION SUPPORTS

In order to best meet the needs of the families, FRCs must be able to offer them access to necessary goods and services, including some the organizations cannot provide themselves. Consequently, a core function of FRCs is the provision of resource and navigation supports (See Figure 8). Some of the resources are offered more broadly. FRCs often distribute tangible concrete supports to any family that requests to be on a list or comes during the distribution time or event. These include items for infants and toddlers, such as diapers, formula, clothing, toys and car seats. Preschool and school age children are included in the sharing of activity kits and in book giveaways. Some of the items are not specifically for children, but meet typical family needs such as gift cards for transportation and cleaning products. Families are often provided with child care during parent only events and some types of FRC activities include a meal or snacks for family members.

Additionally, FRCs seek to inform their audience, not only of what they have to offer internally but also, of outside community resources. They share printed flyers and brochures within the FRC and at outside events. They include information within their online newsletters for subscribers. They post content on a variety of social media outlets.

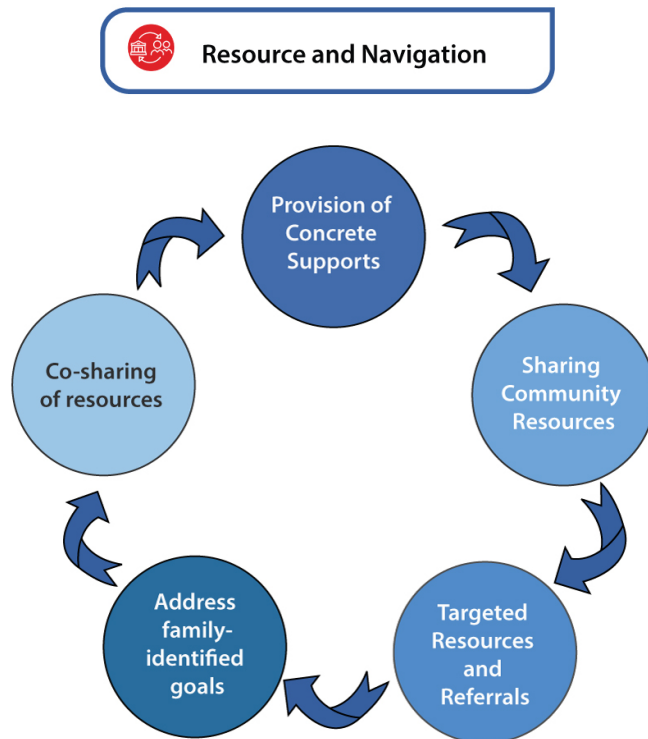
FRCs recognize that the approach taken toward families is just as important as the resource itself. When FRCs refer to targeted resources and referrals, they are indicating the intentional process they use to match families to a source that is highly likely to meet their needs. This process includes a warm hand-off, where a family support professional provides the family with specific contact information for an individual or organization that they know has the resource that the family needs and that it

will be available and accessible to them. Often a warm hand off also includes a phone call to the contact in an effort to alert them to be prepared to hear from the family or to obtain permission from a family to request that a contact reach out to the family directly. FRCs are also deliberate about assisting families to build social capital by helping them to build relationships with other families and community members who have or know how to access needed resources.

Part of a strengths-based approach toward families is implementing a process of partnering with families in identifying their own goals. FRCs seek to connect families to resources and supports that specifically address family identified goals and follow up to ensure that the families' personal objectives have been reached. Some agencies have dedicated staff, often called family navigators, who fill this role. In other cases, navigation services are included as part of every staff member's job description.

Co-sharing of resources refers to structured relationships between FRCs and other organizations to share space, services, or staff. This approach allows FRCs and their partners to meet the full spectrum of family needs as well as increasing convenience for families. FRC staff often provide educational opportunities or services within buildings or spaces owned by other community organizations. They co-facilitate or share teaching responsibilities with staff members from other agencies. This allows FRCs to go to locations that are more accessible to families and to extend the reach, availability, and breadth of their services. In some cases, FRCs are located in the same building or in direct proximity to other organizations that families regularly frequent. Examples include schools, libraries, shopping malls, or county social services.

Figure 8.



PARENT LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Parents are essential partners in meeting the needs of their own families and in contributing to the effectiveness of an FRC. Parent Leadership has a wide range of benefits for the FRC as an organization, the individual staff members, the surrounding community, and, of course, for parents themselves. Parents can take on a variety of roles and levels of commitment within the FRC (See Figure 9). parent leadership utilize and develop different skills and require different levels of experience and commitment. However, the first and most important parent leadership role championed by FRCs is that of leader and advocate for one's own family.

PARTICIPANT

Participating in FRC opportunities and programming is the first step in parent leadership development. As parents interact with their children and with other family members, connect with others outside their family, and engage with staff, they acquire new knowledge, receive feedback, and observe interactions that build their own leadership skills. Families have the opportunity to gain a network of support that builds their confidence in negotiating family life and can also prove instrumental for accessing services from complex, bureaucratic systems.

PARTNER

Partnership entails staff and organizational leadership working together with parents on equal terms and sharing co-ownership in decision-making. Parents and staff can partner on identifying and meeting the needs of the family, in decision-making about programming or organizational structure, and in identifying and facilitating community change. Partnership is as much about the way the FRC interacts with parents as it is about what is done.

VOLUNTEER

Volunteering allows parents to "try on" new responsibilities and begin to see themselves as agents of change. Volunteer roles can be formal, or an organic extension of a parent's development as a leader. In either case, the parent takes on a defined role, which entails training or support to develop needed skill or knowledge for that role. The parents serve as visible representatives for a specific program or aspect of the organization for which they are a volunteer.

LEADER

A leader differs from a volunteer in that they have the opportunity to influence programs, policies and systems. Parent leaders have input on agency decisions and act as spokespersons representing other families, parents and children within the FRC or within the larger community. They advocate for their FRC, sometimes sharing their own story and experiences. Parent leaders often recruit and encourage other families to participate in FRC activities and act as mentors to families as they become involved. Some parent leaders take on the responsibility of planning, coordinating and leading projects that benefit other parents and/or the FRC organization.

ADVISOR

As an advisor, a parent takes on a more formalized role of representing other parents and parent leaders as part of the FRC board or other FRC leadership structures. Parent advisors make recommendations on organizational and policy decisions, represent the views of parents and assist in FRC planning and evaluation. Advisors also often represent their FRC within the community by serving on a community-based group, coalition, or task force. Information is then brought back to the FRC to inform the FRC of community needs.

ADVOCATE

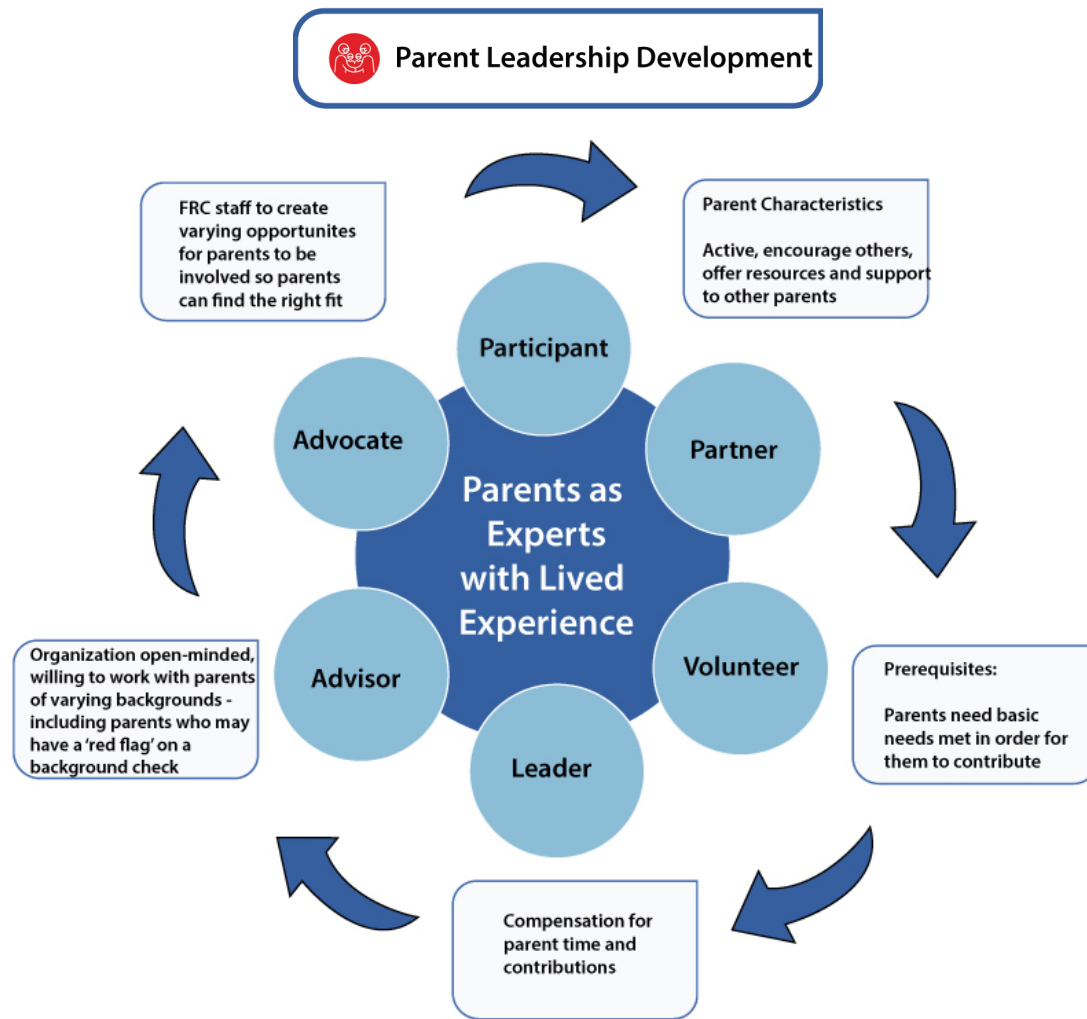
Every parent/caregiver is an advocate for their own child and family, simply by making daily decisions on behalf of their child. However, parent advocates can take on a more formal role of advocating for the needs of other children and families in addition to their own. Sharing personal stories at the community system levels has a huge impact on promoting change. Parents give policy issues a human face

and ensure that policies are shaped by families' experiences and needs. Advocacy can happen at many levels. Parents can act as advocates within the FRC organization, within the community and with politicians to promote policies that result in systems change.

In order for FRCs to foster and support parent leadership, they have to be very intentional and committed to incorporating parent leadership into their policies, structure and practice. Parent leadership requires that all FRC staff have the training and dedicated time that they need to support parent leadership and voice within their programming and their organization. Parent leadership is the responsibility of everyone in the FRC and must remain an explicit priority in order to be successful.

FRC must establish a process for developing and supporting parent and participant involvement in leadership and policy development. This process must include outreach and recruitment strategies that help staff identify parents who are ready for leadership, help them identify the best role for them, and support them as they grow into different roles. Training and mentoring is essential for the development of parent leadership skills and the success of parents in their chosen roles. Parents must also be acknowledged and compensated for the work that they do within and on behalf of the FRC. FRCs that devote the time and energy to develop successful parent leaders will find that they are enriched and benefitted by the experience.

Figure 9.

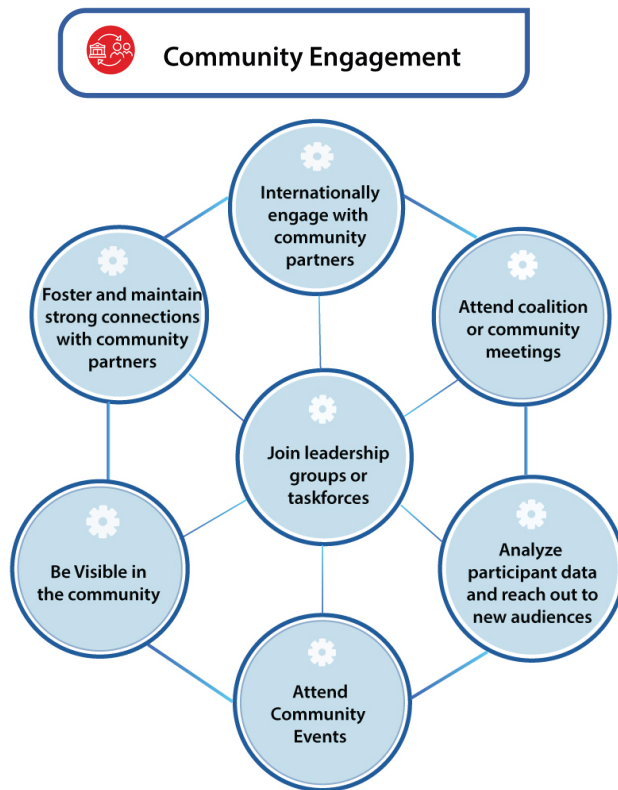


COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The level and diversity of efforts necessary to fully support families require the support of an entire community. FRCs are an important resource for helping families to clarify their needs and advocating with families to influence factors that impact them out in the community. Examples include the quality of schools, the physical environment and safety

of the community, the impact of racism and discrimination, the availability and access to basic resources, and the presence of recreational spaces and opportunities. FRCs can also address social norms that affect families, such as how a family is defined, the appropriateness of seeking parenting knowledge and support, or behavioral expectations for both child and parent.

Figure 10.



This level of advocacy and change necessitates collaboration between many stakeholders within a community.

FRCs are very intentional about implementing a variety of strategies to support community partnerships. Figure 10 describes community engagement strategies that allow FRCs to create a web or network of relationships that work on behalf of families.

Examples of potential sources of FRC partnerships include:

- Libraries
- Schools
- Childcare
- Health care/hospitals
- Mental health
- Human/social services
- Community centers Clubs
- Service organizations
- Faith communities
- Law enforcement
- Judicial
- Parks and Recreation Departments
- Sports teams
- Local businesses
- Policymakers
- Local decision makers/leaders

EVALUATION, ASSESSMENT AND ACCREDITATION

Several assessments have been incorporated into the Wisconsin FRC Model to evaluate and sustain quality practice of FRCs. The Standards of Quality for Family Strengthening and Support Program Self-Assessment measures progress and is used to indicate the level of quality reach for each standard on a scale from approaching foundational quality to achieving high quality practice. Each FRC is asked to complete the assessment annually. FRCs are encouraged to incorporate the input of a variety of staff members and parent leaders. The results of this assessment inform the FRC annual Action Plan, which guides efforts related to infrastructure growth across the upcoming year of service. The assessment results are also reported to the Prevention Board.

FRCs are encouraged to use the Standards Participant Survey annually to appraise participants' experience of the impact of the Quality Standards on FRC interactions with families. The FRCs are asked to use the results to reflect on how their infrastructure has been reflected in practice and impacted the experience of parent participants.

The Awareness to Action manual for child sexual abuse prevention in organizations is used to assess the existing policies and procedures within FRCs and determine which additional safeguards needed to be put into place.

Upon completion of training, the FRCs create a child sexual abuse prevention action plan to implement with the expectation that there will be a regular review process for sustainability and to incorporate new updates.

Professional development standards for FRCs are implemented with training requirements for staff along with best practice standards for types of programming that are frequently utilized, but not uniformly structured across FRCs. The Wisconsin Professional Development System for Family Support Professionals has been developed to meet the training needs to support the standards, which are based on the Wisconsin Core Competencies for Family Support Professionals.

A process evaluation of the pilot of the FRC infrastructure grant, conducted by the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute, established a theory of change for infrastructure development. Researchers identified the process to implement and support change in FRC structure, integrate protective factors, and develop parent leadership.

A section was built into the Wisconsin Prevention Reporting System to create a profile for each FRC receiving grant funding from the Prevention Board as well as the programming and services they are each offering annually. This data collection process allows the state to provide an overview, for interested stakeholders and policy makers of how FRCs are operating collectively across the state and identify those aspects that are unique to each FRC.

Efforts also continue to unify program evaluation across FRCs. Use of the same tool for comparable programs or services provides the opportunity to assess programs across FRCs. This builds a statewide picture of the effectiveness of programs or services that is more telling than that of the individual FRC.

Thriving Wisconsin is the statewide FRC network. They have developed an accreditation process to achieve the designation as a Family Resource Center of Quality. This accreditation utilizes the best practice elements within the Wisconsin FRC Model. Once FRCs have achieved accreditation they will have recognition of the efforts they have dedicated to infrastructure elements and striving toward ever higher levels of quality practice.

CONCLUSION

Supporting the varied needs of Wisconsin families is both a rewarding and challenging endeavor. Family Resource Centers are uniquely positioned to meet those needs. Establishing statewide standards for best practice helps to ensure that families from one part of the state receive the same level of quality and approach to services as another. Additionally, FRCs benefit and are strengthened by statewide structure, by network opportunities for collaboration and shared learning, and by state level resources and technical support. FRCs are dedicated to reaching out to families in the most effective ways. Statewide standards and support for best practices can help to extend that reach.



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