



New Jersey Family Success Centers



Practice Profile



New Jersey Family Success Center Model

The New Jersey Department of Children and Families (DCF) funds a statewide network of Family Success Centers as “one-stop” shops that provide wrap-around resources and supports for families before they find themselves in crisis. Family Success Centers offer primary child abuse prevention services to families and bring together concerned community residents, leaders, and community agencies to address the problems that threaten the safety and stability of families and the community. There is no cost to access services provided by Family Success Centers (FSCs).





The Family Success Center Practice Profile

The New Jersey Department of Children and Families and the Family Success Center (FSC) network embarked on a partnership with National Implementation Research Network (NIRN) at the University of North Carolina to develop a practice profile for the Family Success Centers. Practice profiles are detailed descriptions of a practice's guiding principles and essential functions that must be present to say the practice exists. The essential functions include detailed descriptions of the activities FSCs would carry out to ensure consistency across the network, while also allowing for contextualization of the essential functions based on the FSC's community.

A Practice Profile...

- describes the essential functions that allow a model to be teachable, learnable, and doable in community organizations
- consists of measurable and/or observable, behaviorally-based indicators for each essential function so that the practice can be better supported and evaluated
- promotes consistency across practitioners at the level of actual service delivery

(Metz, 2016; Metz, Bartley, Blasé, & Fixsen, 2011)



Guiding Principals of Family Success Centers

The philosophies, values, or beliefs that FSCs have when working with families and communities.

Collaborative	FSCs work in partnership with community and families.
Community-based	The FSCs are driven by the community and situated in an accessible place within the community.
Culturally Responsive	FSCs provide an atmosphere, approach, and services that are non-stigmatizing and culturally appropriate for the community, and diverse families.
Family-Focused	Programs, activities, and services are centered on family needs and are family driven. Family reflects all members of a family, whether they participate in the center as a family unit, or individually.
Flexible	Programs, activities, and services should be based on evolving family and community needs and enhanced or refined as needed.
Strengths-Based	Staff and the FSC environment are focused on empowering and strengthening families, relationships, and self-sufficiency.
Voluntary	Participation in all services, functions, and programs is voluntary. Volunteerism is encouraged within the FSC and community.
Welcoming	FSCs are safe, warm, and welcoming neighborhood gathering places.
Holistic	FSCs view, understand, and approach the work taking into account all aspects of the lives of families and individual family members we partner with and within the context of the community.

Essential Functions of Family Success Centers

The components that must be present to say that the practice exists and detail what is done when working with families and communities.

Engagement – FSCs engage with families, individual family members, community partners, and stakeholders to build relationships in the center and community that are substantive and meaningful. Strong relationships within the community can facilitate community cohesion and social capital (McDonnel, Behn-Arieh, & Melton, 2015).

Active Listening – FSCs actively listen for families' and individual family member's interests, goals, and needs; recognize that some families don't know how to ask for support or don't know what supports are available.

Connecting - FSCs provide referrals and linkages to external community resources that are identified with families and/or individual family members. Social supports must be integrated into a broad network of family services in order to meet the varying needs of families (Thompson, 2015). There is increased evidence that adequate social and material supports are necessary for children's safety (Pelton, 2015; Thompson, 2015).

Advocacy – FSCs work on behalf of, in coordination with, and empower families and individual family members to ensure their needs are met. FSCs partner with families and individual family members to support the development of skills to advocate on their own behalf.

Coordination - FSCs create a sense of community among the families and individual family members by helping them be an active part of their Center and community through volunteer work. FSCs coordinate the recruitment of individuals, families, partners and volunteers in the community to provide skill building programs, services, and activities. Opportunities for families and individual family members to connect within a community can increase the community's social capital (Dijken, Stam, & Winter, 2016).

Leadership – FSCs engage families, individual family members, and community partners in leadership activities within Centers. Community strategies that promote child protection focus on creating a shared belief and collective responsibility to protect children from harm and expand the range of services and supports available to families and individual family members (Daro & Dodge, 2009).

Skill Building – FSCs organize and oversee programs, services, activities, and resources within the Center that focus on strengthening child, family and individual family members' skills and protective factors. Family-centered programs that focus on positive parenting and family interactions, child cognitive development, and reducing family level and community level poverty showed the most benefits for children and families (Ruffalo, Evans & Luken, 2003; Yoshikawa, 1995). Additionally, strategies to improve economic wellbeing of families and individual family members within a community can improve community health and wellness (Pinderhughes, Davis, & Williams, 2016).

Continuous Improvement – FSCs use data to guide decision-making, refine practice and improve services.



Fundamental Questions about Family Success Centers

The process for developing the practice profile involved individual interviews with a sample of FSC and DCF staff, as well as an extensive vetting and consensus process with a sample of FSC staff, directors, and DCF staff. Throughout this process, participants had questions related to fundamental aspects of the FSC work that were beyond the scope of the practice profile. These questions were shared with the FSC Practice Profile Leadership Team and the team agreed that it was important to provide clarity to the FSC network with regards to the fundamental questions. The Leadership Team went through a facilitated process to review existing FSC documents, draft responses to the fundamental questions, and garner a shared understanding of the responses. The Leadership Team would like to share the responses to these questions with the FSC network in addition to the practice profile to support ongoing communication with the FSC network. The fundamental questions and responses are provided on the next page.



Fundamental Questions about Family Success Centers (continued)

What is the overall goal of FSCs?

- ***Prevent child abuse and neglect, and strengthen protective factors.***
- Parental resilience
- Social connections
- Knowledge of parenting and child development
- Concrete support in times of need
- Social and emotional competence of children

What is the purpose of the FSCs?

- Enrich the lives of children by strengthening families and neighborhoods.
- Develop networks of family strengthening services to prevent child abuse and neglect.
- Provide integrated, locally based services that are family focused and culturally responsive.
- Strengthen connections with families, between families, and to the community

Where should FSCs be located?

- Strongly encouraged to be located in a separate structure from host agencies
- Convenient, accessible and welcoming to families
- Areas where there are opportunities to create community connections

Who do FSCs serve?

- Families

What needs do FSCs attend to?

- Programming is designed to meet the needs of families with children