

Service Provider Agreement Review 2022



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Introduction

Partnership for Strong Families (PSF), the lead community-based child welfare care agency, has been under contract with the Florida Department of Children and Families since 2003. PSF provides comprehensive child welfare services in 13 North Central Florida counties and has been leading innovative approaches to strengthen families and increase the presence of protective factors for more than a decade. Beginning in 2007, PSF began to develop their Family Resource Center Model by creating a network of Family Resource Centers (FRC) that emphasize a strength-based approach while utilizing the Protective Factors Framework to provide prevention services and supports to families (Partnership for Strong Families, 2020).

The PSF FRC model is built upon a multi-system collaborative focusing on primary prevention that works toward the goal of preventing child maltreatment and reducing entries into foster care. A major strength of the FRC Model utilized at PSF's FRCs is its strong focus on community collaborations as a means of addressing identified needs in at-risk neighborhoods. As of 2022, a network of 103 community partners across Gainesville and Lake City FRCs has been developed. This number only reflects those official agreements that have been created, there is a much wider array of community partners without official agreements that help with referrals and events regularly. Every service provided at the FRCs is free and responsive to the needs of the surrounding community as identified by community partners, community members of the targeted areas (patrons), and other stakeholders.

PSF's FRCs have been strategically placed within geographic hotspots with historically high rates of child maltreatment (Partnership for Strong Families, 2020), within communities that have historically had limited access to resources. There are three FRCs in Gainesville, FL and one in Lake City, FL that are the focus of this report. The three FRCs in Gainesville, FL are Library Partnership Resource Center (LPRC), SWAG Family Resource Center (SWAG FRC), and Cone Park Library Resource Center (CPLRC). The Family Resource Center located in Lake City; FL is the NorthStar Family Resource Center (NSFRC). In addition, PSF has a fifth FRC located in Chiefland, FL that is not a part of this

evaluation. However, the Tri-County Resource Center in Chiefland does make use of many those agreements provided to All FRCs and has additional SPA and MOU agreements specific to that location that are not listed in this paper.

In June of 2008, PSF partnered with the Alachua County Library District (ACLD) to open a co-located FRC to help reduce the stigma regarding interactions with social services. PSF also wanted to create a center that would encourage community members to seek out resources before a crisis occurs, subsequently preventing risks to child safety (Falconer et al., 2012). The result was PSF's first FRC opening as the Library Partnership Resource Center in July of 2009 (Partnership for Strong Families, 2019-a).

The SWAG FRC was created and began operating in 2012 (Partnership for Strong Families, 2019-b) as a community collaboration between PSF, the Southwest Advocacy Group (SWAG), the Alachua County government, and community support and financial contributions from other community partners. At the time of the initial collaboration, the Southwest Advocacy Group was already an established entity in the community with the goal of improving the lives of residents in southwest Gainesville. As a show of support, the Alachua County Board of Commissioners donated the building that houses the SWAG FRC and continues to provide supports and services to individuals and families.

In 2012, the Alachua County Library District (ACLD) began making plans to open a new branch to serve southeast Gainesville, a community with historically limited access to resources. Due to the existing perceived success of the Library Partnership FRC, along with the identified needs of the community, Partnership for Strong Families (PSF) was asked to partner with ACLD to also open a FRC at the Cone Park Library. As southeast Gainesville was considered a "hotspot" of high rates of reported child maltreatment, PSF agreed to move forward with this new venture. The Cone Park Library Resource Center (CPLRC) opened part-time in December 2013, and with early indicators of high service utilization, the CPLRC began operating full-time in May 2014 (Partnership for Strong Families, 2019-c).

PSF has long known that Columbia County, the area directly north of Alachua County, has needed an increased level of intervention to combat the rising number of shelters (i.e., out-of-home placements) and child maltreatments. The decision to create a FRC in Lake City came after discussions of need and community readiness for such support between community members, community partners, outside agencies, and PSF staff (Partnership for Strong Families, 2019; WCJB, 2021) and served as the impetus for applying for, and receiving, a grant from the Children’s Bureau that would aid (in part) with this initiative.

In 2009, the FRCs began formalizing community partnerships through the use of various agreement types. The agreement types include Memorandum of Understandings (MOU), Memorandum of Agreements (MOA), Service Provision Agreements (SPA), and Host Agency Agreements (HAA). MOU and MOA agreements outline how the FRC will be used as a shared space to provide outreach or referrals, there is no significant difference between them. SPA contracts outline specific services that agencies provide onsite at the FRCs. Finally, HAA contracts outline FRCs as locations for volunteers or interns from other entities to provide staff support services.

This report summarizes the official collaborative agreements between all Partnership for Strong Families FRCs and outside agencies during 2022. The goal of this report is to provide a comprehensive overview of the various agreements and service provisions used to implement the Protective Factors Framework within our FRC model.

Methods

This report gathers and presents community collaboration agreements created between four of PSF’s FRCs (LPRC, SWAG FRC, NSFRC, and CPLRC) and community agencies. This review required consultation with PSF and FRC administration representatives and staff to secure any available historical documentation of collaboration agreements and copies of the actual agreements so that their

content could be reviewed and analyzed. A critical appraisal of this information was conducted by the three lead authors of the report, which represents a summary description of the form, content, and scope of identified collaborative agreements during 2022, along with a brief itemization of each partner's primary service and support role in the community and a link to their website (if available).

During 2022, there was a total of four reported contract agreements executed across all PSF FRC sites. However, two agreements were duplicated. Therefore, two agreements will be reviewed for the primary purposes of this report.

Regarding data organization for this report, the data are presented in tables stratified according to protective factor. In 2022, PSF continued to align their services using a protective factor framework that was derived from the Center for the Study of Social Policy (CSSP).

In addition to partners with official agreements, there are many providers that deliver one-time events and provide support through sponsorship, co-event planning, and tabling. Currently, there is no process in place to keep a record of these connections. Providers may work extensively to support a specific event but if they are only providing services once or twice a year, they may never make a formal agreement (S. Merritt, personal communication, October 31, 2022).

Some agreements indicate multiple protective factors from services provided by the agency, and as such, agency names have been duplicated across provider tables. Additionally, MOU, MOA, and HAA contracts do not include protective factor data. Contract data tables 2 and 3 (see below) include the specified FRC site, a title of services provided if applicable, and agency name for all agreements initiated in 2022. Service summaries are denoted in the tables to provide an idea of the types of services provided in each agreement, and additional details are in the agreements.

Concerning the formal agreement execution process during 2022, PSF or outside agencies initiated communication, agreed to collaborate, and then a specific contract agreement type would be signed by

both agencies. Once the contracts were signed, the contract agreements were considered active. Most agreements do not have a dissolution date and are therefore considered active unless otherwise formally dissolved by either party. Dissolution dates, if applicable, have been included in the agency description and links section of this report. Following the 2021 Service Provider Report, five agency agreements were dissolved.

Stacy Merritt, Director of FRCs at PSF (personal communication, August 29, 2022) shared that historically all contracts were tracked in a database that listed them as active or inactive, indicating whether they were currently providing services. The data system is described as a “living document” that provides the current status of any contract. It does not record/date stamp any changes over time with respect to active/inactive status for the direct provision of services and supports. For this reason, this report considers all contracts active, meaning that services can be started up again, without the need for a new contract, even if services were not being provided at any given time. Of the 117 contracts initiated between 2009 and 2022, 87% (n=103) are active in 2022; see Pegram, H., et al (2022) to learn more about these community collaborations. When an agency/organization has been dissolved or if there was a formal dissolution of the contract agreement the contract is considered “dissolved” and identified as such in the agency description and links section of both reports. Between 2009 and 2022, 16 agreements were formally dissolved either by a formal dissolution date or the provider no longer providing services. Of the 2022 agreements that will be examined in this report, none were dissolved.

It is to be noted that some agencies specify in their contract that they were willing to provide services for all PSF FRCs even though services might have only been provided at one specific FRC location. In this case, they have been recorded in this report as providing services to all FRCs.

Regarding data management, Pebbles Edelman, Chief of Clinical and Community Services and Stacy Merritt, Director of FRCs have worked with the FRC Managers and PSF’s Program Quality and Project Management department over the years to create and maintain all FRC contractual agreements.

Limitations

Regarding data validity, after consultation with PSF FRC staff and a review of service descriptions on agreements, it was confirmed that the standardized SPA contracts also included services not meant to be provided at all FRC locations (S. Merritt, personal communication, August 29, 2022). Thus, although the standardized SPA contract applies to all FRC sites, the intent and actual activities of the partner across each individual site may apply to fewer FRCs. Subsequently, the number of SPAs affiliated with an individual FRC may overestimate the number of partners actively engaged in specific collaborative activities with each specific FRC each year.

Furthermore, some of the providers are not currently offering services. This could be due to a variety of reasons including funding limitations, staff shortages, or no community need. Inactivity is not synonymous with agreement dissolution. This is not specific data that is captured, so it is not designated in this report.

Classification of Services and Supports by the Protective Factors Framework

During 2022, PSF continued to implement the CSSP protective factors framework for all service provision agreements and services. This allowed an opportunity for PSF staff to talk with providers about the protective factors framework at the beginning of the relationship and explain to them the importance of PSF's plan to strengthen families (P. Edelman, personal communication, November 8, 2022). The use of protective factors also reportedly made it easier to use protective factors surveys that were being used with varying projects at PSF.

Protective factors, as constructs, are "...conditions or attributes..." of individuals, families, communities, or the larger society that lessen the risk of maltreatment and promote healthy development and well-being of children and families (Capacity Building Center for States, 2020; Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2020).

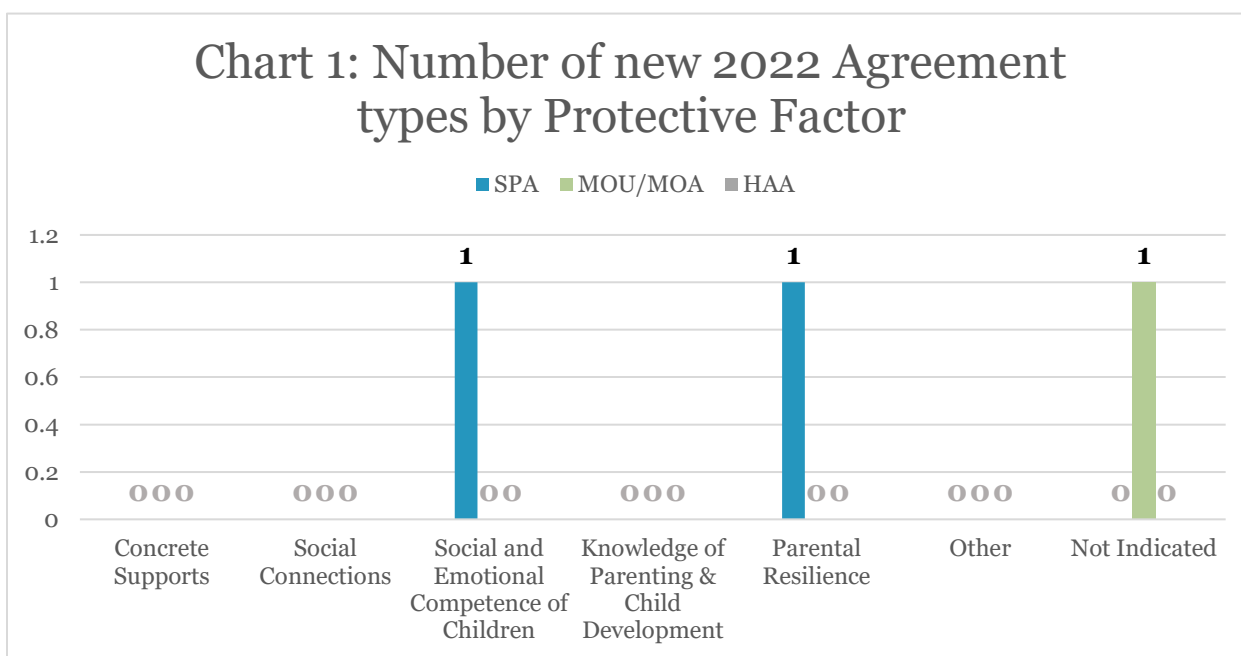
PSF adopted the exclusive use of the CSSP protective factors as a guide for a service framework for the FRCs in 2021. This framework was developed by the Center for the Study of Social Policy (CSSP, 2018) and includes the following protective factors: *Concrete Supports in Times of Need*, *Social Connections*, *Social and Emotional Competence of Children*, *Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development*, and *Parental Resilience*.

The adoption of these protective factors by PSF was reportedly guided by discussions, considerations, and feedback from PSF staff and leadership, community partners and collaborators, and in consultation with child welfare specialists. An itemization of the conceptual definitions is denoted in Table 1.

Table 1: CSSP Protective Factors Framework	
Protective Factor	Protective Factor Definition
Concrete Support in Times of Need	Access to concrete support and services that address a family's needs and help minimize stress caused by challenges
Social Connections	Positive relationships that provide emotional, informational, instrumental, and spiritual support
Social and Emotional Competence of Children	Family and child interactions that help children develop the ability to communicate clearly, recognize and regulate their emotions, and establish and maintain relationships
Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development	Understanding child development and parenting strategies that support physical, cognitive, language, social, and emotional development
Parental Resilience	Managing stress and functioning well when faced with challenges, adversity, and trauma

2022 SPAs by Protective Factor

The total number of newly developed SPA agreements for the 2022 year was two. In total, 99 SPA agreements have been created by active providers as of 2022. In Chart 1 the newly executed SPA agreement has been separated by Protective Factor. The two newly developed agreements did not incorporate services related to Concrete Supports, Social Connections, or Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development protective factors. As such, information regarding these protective factors and other groupings not covered within the 2022 agreements can be found in Bernardin, T., et al (2022) and Pegram, H., et al (2022), and will be excluded for the purposes of this report.



Note. One SPA agreement is listed more than once as its services cover more than one protective factor.

Concrete Supports in Times of Need is access to concrete support and services that address a family's needs and help minimize stress caused by challenges in their lives. In 2022, there were no new agreements executed with the intention of providing Concrete Supports in Times of Need.

Social Connections are positive relationships that provide emotional, informational, instrumental, and spiritual support. In 2022, there were no new agreements executed with the intention of providing Social Connections.

Social and Emotional Competence of Children focuses on family and child interactions that help children develop the ability to communicate clearly, recognize and regulate their emotions, and establish and maintain relationships. In 2022, there was one newly executed agreement for the social and emotional competence of children. Table 2 lists the agreement established in 2022 focused on this protective factor.

Table 2: Social and Emotional Competence of Children		
FRC (s)	Agency Name	Service
ALL	New Mt. Pisgah AME Church	Provide resources to assist with students' tutoring needs, including homework help, GED, and other educational needs.

Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development bolsters the understanding of child development and parenting strategies that support physical, cognitive, language, social, and emotional development. In 2022, there were no new agreements executed with the intention of providing Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development.

Parental Resilience is managing stress and functioning well when faced with challenges, adversity, and trauma. In 2022, there was one newly executed agreement created to provide parental resilience services. Table 3 lists the agreement established in 2022 focused on this protective factor.

Table 3: Parental Resilience		
FRC (s)	Agency Name	Service
ALL	New Mt. Pisgah AME Church	Assist with clothing and food pantries. This includes helping to organize pantries, providing resources to assist with clothing and food giveaway efforts.

Other refers to any service to patrons at one or more FRC that was not specifically connected to a protective factor, as identified in the agreement. In 2022, there were no agreements created to provide services identified as “other”.

MOU/MOA and HAA agreements

This section is a review of agreements that are not SPAs between FRCs and service providers.

MOU/MOA agreements show the use of a shared space, while HAA agreements show an arrangement made to host a volunteer or intern at an FRC. MOU/MOA agreements are developed by partner agencies as their preferred form of documentation of service provisions.

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) contracts established in 2022 are outlined in Table 4. These two types of contracts have no notable difference between them as they both outline how the FRC will be used as a shared space to provide outreach or assist patrons. In 2022, there was one newly executed MOU agreement. Table 4 lists the MOU agreement established in 2022.

Table 4: MOU/MOAs		
FRC (s)	Agency Name	Protective Factors Indicated
NorthStar	Friends of Columbia County Public Library	An agreement was made to establish and maintain 20 outdoor kiosks at NorthStar with the pages of a children’s book. A protective factor was not indicated.

Host Agency Agreements (HAA) outline when PSF agrees to take on volunteers or interns from an organization. A HAA details the rules and responsibility of each party in relation to the volunteer or intern. In 2022, there were no new HAAs executed.

Agency Descriptions and Links

The following is an alphabetical list of service providers for the two agreements covered in this report.

1. Friends of Columbia County Public Library

Friends of Columbia County Public Library is a nonprofit organization founded in 1975 to support the Columbia County Public Library. Friends of Columbia County Public Library is dedicated to the library's mission to educate, entertain, and enlighten its patrons, by providing programs that satisfy the needs and interests of its members, and expanding awareness, appreciation of, and support for library services among Columbia County residents, institutions, and businesses. On September 16th, 2022, the Friends of Columbia County Public Library executed an MOU agreement with the NorthStar FRC.

Website: [Friends of the Columbia County Public Library - FOL Home \(wildapricot.org\)](https://www.wildapricot.org)

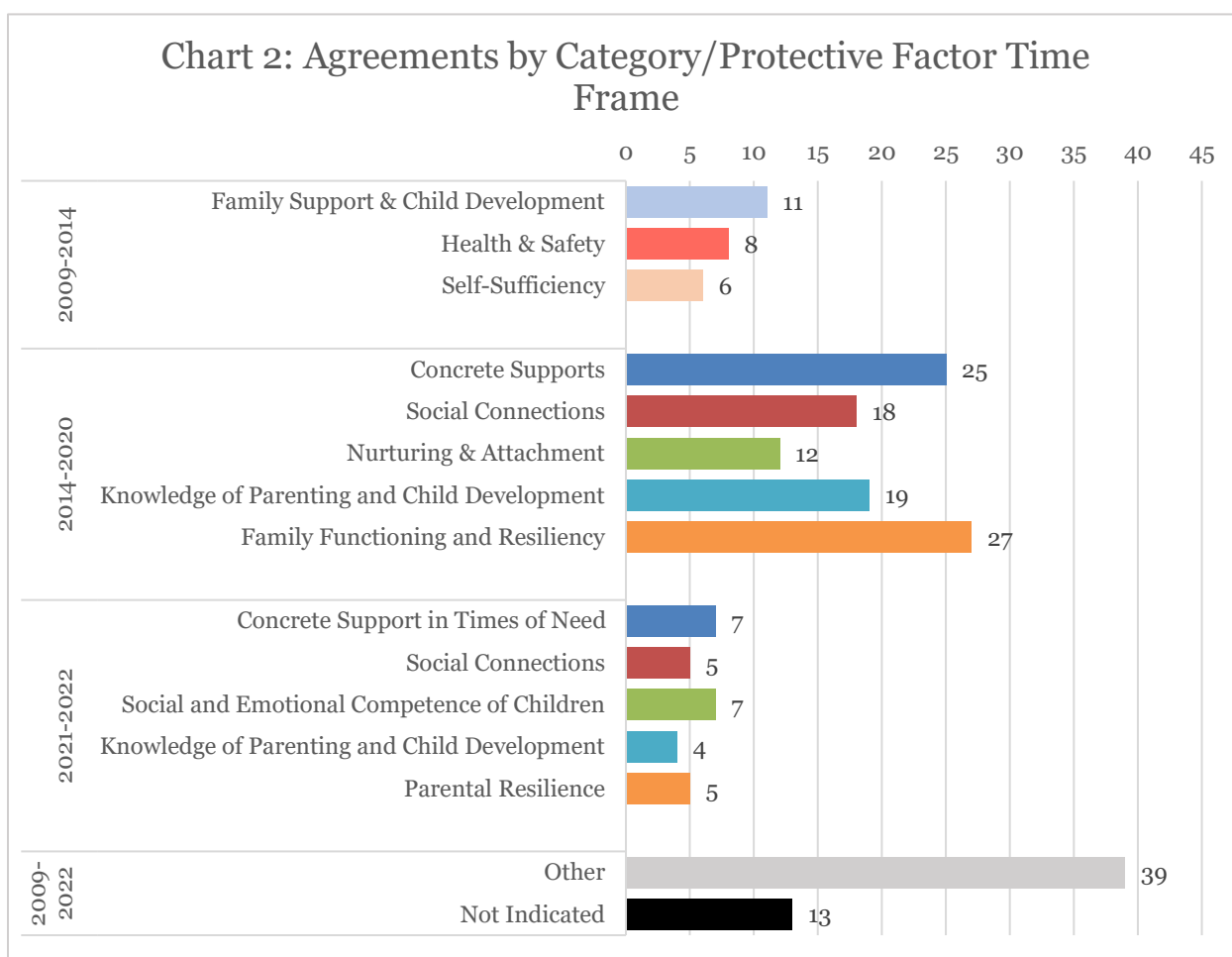
2. New Mt. Pisgah AME Church

New Mt. Pisgah African Methodist Episcopal Church was established in 1984 in Lake City, FL. Their mission is to “Equip, empower, and encourage the people of God to grow the kingdom of God.” On March 7th, 2022, all the PSF FRCs executed a SPA with New Mt. Pisgah AME Church to provide resources to assist with students' tutoring needs, including homework help, GED, and other educational needs and to assist with clothing and food pantries. This includes helping to organize pantries, providing resources to assist with clothing and food giveaway efforts.

Website: [MT Pisgah Ame Church, African Methodist Church, 345 NE Washington St \(hub.biz\)](https://www.hub.biz)

All Active Agreements in 2022

As denoted above, this report focuses primarily on the description of all newly reported agreements formed in 2022. This information expands upon descriptive analyses of agreements initiated between 2009 and 2020 (Bernardin, T., et al, 2022); 103 of which are reportedly still active. As discussed above, all contracts are considered active unless they have a formal dissolution of agreement.



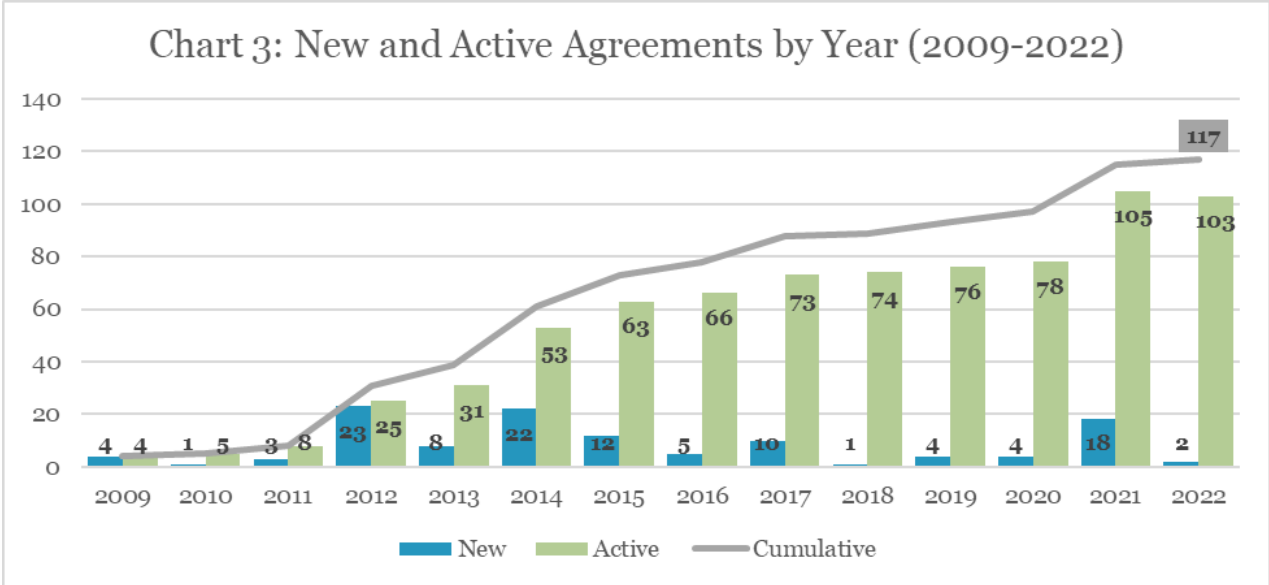
Note. Some agreements are listed more than once as services may cover more than one protective factor.

Excluding any contracts that were duplicated in 2022, Chart 2 above, highlights the total number of contracts with collaborative partners that provide services and supports across each of the protective factor categories.

In 2022, there were a total of 103 active agreements (including the 2 highlighted in this report). Of those agreements created in 2022, the protective factors ‘Social and Emotional Competence of Children’ and ‘Parental Resilience’ were identified. More information about the services provided for those protective factors can be found in Tables 2 & 3.

In 2022, all FRCs created teams of patrons (community ambassadors), community providers, and staff to utilize the Strengthening Families Self-Assessment Tool for Community-Based Programs (and associated processes). More information regarding the results of this assessment can be found in Perry

et al. (2022 a, b, c, d). Chart 3 identifies the total number of new and active agreements with the cumulative total of service provider agreements initiated each year at PSF. As of 2022, there have been 117 agreements initiated with an average of 8 agreements each year. The lowest number of agreements were initiated in 2010 and 2018 (n=1). The largest number of agreements (n=23) were initiated in 2012.



Community collaborations are at the heart of PSF’s FRC Model. Resource Center staff make agreements with local community providers to provide services to patrons across non-profit, government, and for-profit businesses. These services are provided at no cost to patrons. As new agreements are initiated, many previous agreements continue to provide ongoing services to patrons. With 103 active providers as of 2022, there has been an 88% retention rate on agreements over 14 years. This speaks highly of PSF’s FRC staffs’ ability to make and sustain community collaborations that provide direct services to families in need.

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