



A Comprehensive Focus Group Analysis on Final Comments Regarding the Family Resource Centers

Haley Pegram
Partnership for Strong Families, USA

Robin Perry
Institute for Child and Family Services Research, USA

Christen Lancaster
Partnership for Strong Families, USA

Toni Spoliansky
Partnership for Strong Families, USA

Institute for Child and Family Services Research



This report was funded by the Children’s Bureau; Administration on Children, Youth, and Families; Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, under grant # 90CA1868. The contents of this report are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the Children’s Bureau.

Contents

Focus Group Methods	2
Questions for Patron Feedback Groups	3
Community Members Final Comments Regarding the FRCs	5
Theme One: General Praise	6
Theme Two: Comparative Quality of the FRC.....	10
Summary	10
References	11

Focus Group Methods

As part of a broader evaluation effort, the utilization of focus groups of patrons receiving services and supports at each of the project's family resource centers (FRC) was proposed to help answer general questions related to the fidelity of services and supports to the protective factor model, the reach of the FRCs' efforts, and implementation drivers, solutions, and barriers. The FRCs include the Cone Park Library Resource Center (CPLRC), the Library Partnership Resource Center (LPRC), the SWAG Family Resource Center (SWAG FRC) and the NorthStar Family Resource Center (NSFRC). Please note, although initially identified as "focus groups" within the evaluation plan, the phrase "patron feedback groups" was substituted for these efforts following consultation with evaluation team members and advisory groups (that included patrons) that suggested the revised group reference would be more engaging and inviting for prospective members¹.

Detailed information related to the methodology guiding the sample selection of patrons to participate and other procedures and limitations associated with the evaluation design can be found in a separate brief (see Perry et.al, 2024). Further, a separate guide was produced that highlighted in detail the processes and protocols utilized in forming and facilitating the patron feedback groups and the structure for the content analysis, results of which are detailed in this report (see Institute for Child and Family Services Research, 2023). In sum, patron participants were randomly sampled to participate from a sampling frame of patrons that consented to participate in the formal evaluation. The selection was stratified across PSF Family Resource Centers with two groups per FRC. Efforts were made to secure between 6 and 10 participants per

¹ Methodological and planning considerations were still guided by theory, principles and protocols associated with the term "focus groups" and other qualitative/narrative approaches for planning, implementation/data collection, and content analyses found with the normative/professional literature.

group with 75% of participants serving as caregivers of children (an additional stratum for selection) given that one of the objectives (among others) of the evaluation is to assess the effect of FRCs in their capacity to prevent maltreatment and family involvement with child welfare systems. Although focus patron feedback groups are FRC specific (and analyses can be stratified by FRC), patrons at each were asked the same questions. Some commonalities of perspective across FRC patron feedback groups were identified that permit an aggregation of findings (and identification of an aggregate content saturation level) in select analyses denoted in this and other reports.

Questions for Patron Feedback Groups

The generation and final selection of questions to be asked with each feedback group was multifaceted and involved a few iterations. First, draft questions were constructed in consultation and brainstorming with other project staff, project implementation team members, and select PSF and FRC administrators. Following refinements to these questions, feedback, edits, and question suggestions were solicited via survey methods from key stakeholders that have been a source of information and consultation for other process evaluation activities. These individuals included program managers at each FRC, as well as members of each FRC Strengthening Family Self-Assessment (SFSA) teams (which include patrons/community ambassadors, key program staff and volunteers, and collaborative partners from the community). Although the survey was made available in electronic format, it was also available in paper form, upon request. One group of respondents—members of the Cone Park Research Advisory Council—met in-person as a group to discuss each question and provide feedback on the content and structure of select questions. The responses from surveyed stakeholders were reviewed, tallied, and summarized. At least one question originally aligned with each protective factor was chosen for inclusion for feedback

group procedures deemed to be of highest rated value to "...best understanding patrons' experiences at, and the impact of, each family resource center." (Perry, Lancaster, & Pegram, 2024).

The final set of questions (and associated sub-questions) included the following:

1. How does [FRC name] assist individuals and families with immediate needs?
2. What resources and supports do they provide?

Have they been helpful?

3. Were the activities and programs welcoming and inclusive? Did they make families feel comfortable interacting with others and participating in activities?
4. When interacting with staff, are you listened to and supported?

Do you think program staff are willing to work collaboratively with you to support your child(ren)'s development?

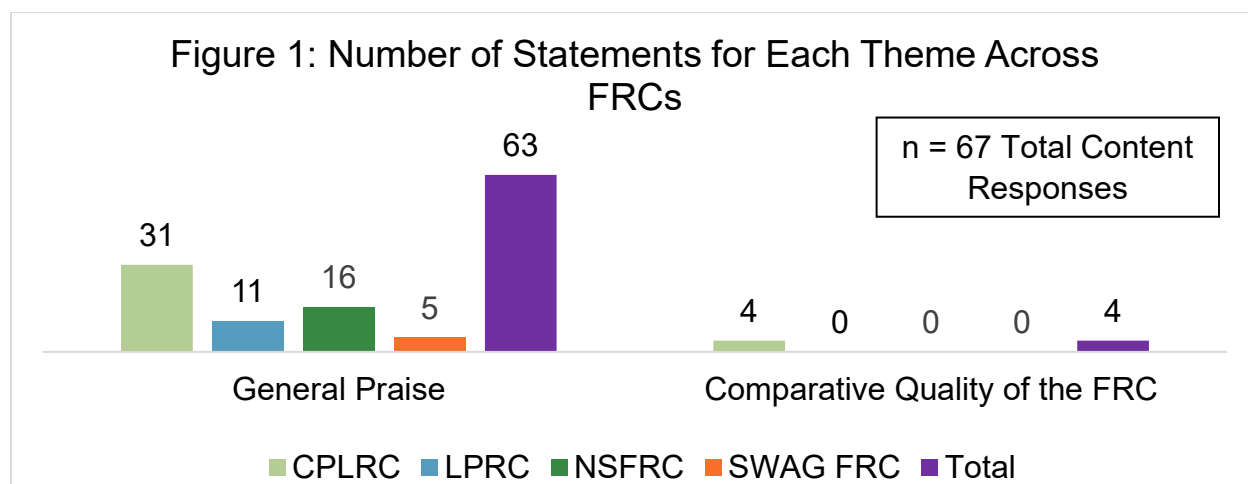
5. When thinking about yourself or other caregivers in the community, did the services and events at the resource center help manage stress?

Did these services help you to better deal with the demands of parenting during stressful times?

6. What additional services do you need as a caregiver to better cope with everyday stressors? What additional services do you need to cope with the stressors in your community?
7. Do program activities support your children's social and emotional development?
8. Do you think that [FRC name] resources have helped caregivers in the community from being involved with the child welfare system?
9. Is there anything else you would like to say about your experiences with [FRC name]?

Community Members Final Comments Regarding the FRCs

This report is an analysis focused on remaining comments from patrons participating in the patron feedback groups. Patrons across eight feedback groups were asked the exiting question, “*Is there anything else you would like to say about your experiences with [FRC name]?*” After analysis of the recorded sessions, researchers identified two themes apparent across all eight groups. These themes are conceptualized as general praise and comparative quality of the FRC. A count of patron statements that apply to each theme can be found below in Figure 1. Patron statements may vary in length from a brief affirmative statement to an extended personal account. Statements may contain content that applies to multiple themes, or content that researchers agreed warranted multiple counts for a single theme.



With 67 total counted statements in response to this question, as shown in Figure 1, general praise had the most mentions among patrons in the feedback groups (n = 63, 94.03%), followed by comparative quality of the FRC (n = 4, 5.97%). This process revealed what may be salient to the FRC patrons when answering this question, indicated by high statement counts of certain themes. Figure 1 also displays statement counts across specific FRCs, indicating particular importance for those patrons. It should be noted, however, that while some counts may

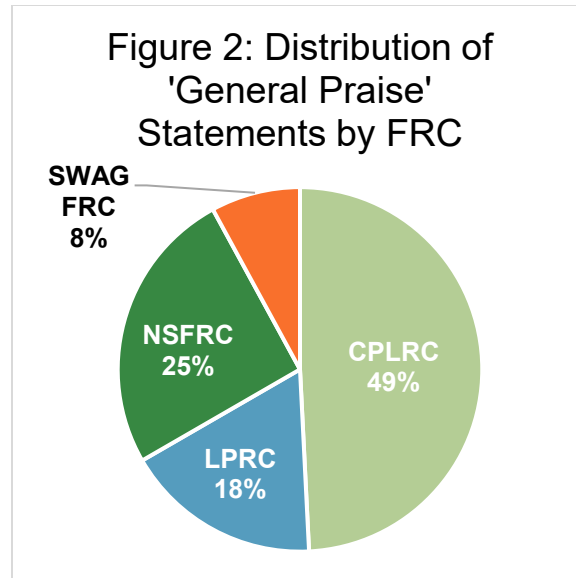
be higher at one FRC compared to others, this could be a byproduct of the feedback group process and the variable participation from patrons across groups and centers.

The first theme, general praise (n = 63), included statements from patrons indicating their appreciation and admiration for the FRCs, the FRC staff, and the impact they have on the local community. With the highest number of statements, this highlights the perceived positive impact of FRC services and events for local children and families. No subthemes were developed for this theme as the title of 'general praise' aptly captured the variety of patron statements identified in this theme.

The second theme, comparative quality of the FRC (n = 4), involves CPLRC patron statements indicating the superior quality of the FRC as compared to other social service agencies. No subthemes were developed for this theme as the title 'comparative quality of the FRC' aptly summarized this collection of patron statements.

Theme One: General Praise

The theme of general praise encompasses patron statements highlighting the positive sentiments felt towards the FRCs. Patrons frequently commented on the significant and beneficial impact the FRCs have on the local community, as well as the attentiveness and caring nature of FRC staff while providing services. These 63 statements came from 21 patrons across the four FRCs. See Figure 2 for a breakdown of how often this theme was manifested at each FRC. Statements related to this theme were associated with five CPLRC patrons, seven NSFRC patrons, four LPRC patrons, and five SWAG FRC patrons.



Frequently, patrons had succinct final comments regarding their FRC in the form of general statements affirming their love, appreciation, and gratitude for the FRCs existence. Some such statements are as follows:

“Never stop doing what y’all doing. Y’all are great at it.”

“Nothing but great experiences, I love it.”

“Y’all perfect, they perfect.”

“Y’all more than enough.”

“I’m just like, I’m grateful, I’m grateful for having a place to come.”

“They [are] like your home.”

“I’m just glad it’s available.”

“I’m glad it’s here, it has definitely been a blessing and super glad we have it.”

“I just have a lot of gratitude.”

“Love it.”

“Everything is pretty good here, I must say.”

“I love all these people at SWAG.”

Some patrons praised their FRC while providing contextual explanations for their appreciation. Many of these specific praises and arising themes have been discussed throughout other theme reports relevant to this set of patron feedback groups. Some patron praises were tied to staff qualities that enhanced their experience while accessing services. Such statements are as follows:

“Y’all sit and y’all listen, like, y’all sit down and help everybody. Don’t change, keep it going.”

“Y’all are great, I’ve had nothing but great times here. Someone’s always asking and telling me what’s going on or [if] something’s going on that day. So, it’s wonderful, just keep it up.”

“You’re dealing with people here that smile.”

“A lot of people like they feel like they just doing it for a job. Y’all do it like y’all want to do it.”

“They follow up with you, yes! Yes they do ... Give them your number, they’ll call you and let you know [about services/events].”

Other patrons praised the FRC in relation to its accessibility and methods of service delivery:

“It’s a good place for resources, get connected with resources. Just been very helpful.”

“Everything about the resource center is good because you got a lot of opportunities here.”

“This is more convenient for me, the convenience has a lot to do with it.”

One patron discussed the patron feedback groups themselves as a positive sign of the FRC’s model practices, engagement, and consideration of patron perspectives. They go on to share:

The fact that you’re doing this now. The fact that you’re reaching out for input is so important that you’re not going on assumptions, but you actually want to get some real input from, you know, our side. And I think that alone is just... how great can that be, you know?

Another patron followed up sharing, *“Reaching out in the community wanting to get their voices because we live, you know, we live amongst.”* As patrons are the most knowledgeable on what

they need in the community, reaching out to them for feedback, even directly with this feedback group, was seen as valuable to them.

Some patrons expressed anxiety around the longevity of the Family Resource Centers, particularly at the NSFRC, whose opening was made possible as a result of a federally funded grant opportunity, and whose sustainability is dependent on other external funding opportunities, which PSF has since been successful at procuring. This worry indicates the deep appreciation and impact the FRC has had on local families. Patrons shared:

Thankful that the centers here, hopeful that it's going to continue, and I can't stress enough that I just, I mean in my professional and personal experience, I don't feel like five years is enough time to really show... I feel like it could spread. It could be we could assist more families and it's important to keep it around.

Hoping to prolong things and I think that it is, it's important to do ... Yes, five years is a long time if you think about five years from now, but in terms of seeing the product of the changes that were made and have been made, it feels like we're just getting in there, you know? We're just getting this thing banging. And then now we're like oh what are we going to do? You know? We had so many- We have so many plans and hopes. And I just feel that if it's able to be continued, which we're going to claim, that getting out there really and just spreading the word a little more.

Patrons at other FRCs also expressed a desire to see their FRC continue and expand while praising the resources received. One SWAG FRC patron shared, “*Yeah I think SWAG is a good program, but it's making people aware of what they can do for people using flyers or something to get them to come in and check them out, check SWAG out.*” The desire to spread the word and expand the FRC's reach demonstrates the value and utility personally experienced during their time being served by the FRC.

One patron at the LPRC felt a sense of belonging with the FRC despite not being a staff member, sharing, “*Maybe we'll have greater things to come in the future, but right now we're doing good. Because I'm part of the Partnership, so I'm saying we (laughs).*” Patrons throughout

feedback groups indicated this same sense of community and connectedness while interacting with their FRC.

Theme Two: Comparative Quality of the FRC

The theme of comparative quality of the FRC encompasses patron statements indicating a general higher quality experience at the FRCs as compared to other social service agencies. There were 4 counted statements which reflected this theme across all of the FRCs, with all statements associated solely with two CPLRC patrons. See Figure 3 for a breakdown of how often this theme was manifested at each FRC.

Throughout the patron feedback groups, patrons discussed various positive qualities of the FRC and FRC staff. However, some patrons indicated these positive qualities as the antithesis to other social service agencies they've worked with. These positive comparative qualities included the convenience of location, the resources available, and their experience receiving services. As they shared,

Y'all are better than the Library Downtown. Like they should have been doing this stuff instead ... The headquarters should've been having the resources for everything- never seen no kind of resources. Besides, you come in there you got rude people you know what I'm saying... But y'all smaller like Library Partnership, SWAG Center, here [Cone Park Library], y'all awesome.

I love it. This is where I come, I used to go downtown but then when I found out Cone Park was here. And so I used to live like Southeast and now I come down, turn down 25th and then I'm here ... So this is more convenient for me, the convenience is, has a lot to do with it and it's a plus you got right.

"A lot of people feel like they just, you doing [it] just for a job. Y'all do it like y'all want to do it [providing services]."

Summary

This report analyzed any remaining comments from patrons regarding their experience at the Family Resource Centers (FRCs) that were not covered in other questions. After eight patron feedback groups and analysis of 67 statements identified for this question, two themes became

apparent across patrons and the FRCs. With the highest number of statements, the theme of general praise comprises statements from patrons that indicate a general appreciation and fondness of their FRC. The second theme, comparative quality of the FRC, covers patron statements indicating a preference and perceived higher quality of their FRC as compared to other social service agencies. Overall, the positive praise and appreciation of the FRCs received when asked for general thoughts and comments is indicative of the positive impact they have had on local communities.

References

Institute for Child and Family Services Research (2023). *PSF Family Resource Centers' Patron Feedback Group Guide*. Tallahassee: Author.

Perry, R., Lancaster, C., & Pegram, H. (2024). *Patron Feedback Group Methodology: Overview & Rationale*. Tallahassee, FL: Institute for Child and Family Services Research.

Suggested Citation:

Pegram, H., Perry, R., Lancaster, C., & Spoliansky, T. (2024). *A Comprehensive Focus Group Analysis on Final Comments Regarding the Family Resource Center*. Tallahassee, FL.: Institute for Child and Family Services Research.