



Child Strengths and Difficulties Outcomes

Final Data Report

(March 2021-June 2024)

Partnership for Strong Families' Family Resource Centers

The Partnership for Strong Families operates four Family Resource Centers that are the focus of this report. These include the SWAG Family Resource Center, Library Partnership Resource Center, Cone Park Library Resource Center (all in Gainesville), and the NorthStar Family Resource Center (in Lake City). As part of a broader evaluation study, a sub-group of consenting patrons agreed to complete baseline and follow-up (every 6 months) Strengths and Difficulty Questionnaires for their child(ren)¹.

All resource center patrons are given the opportunity to participate in the evaluation. Data collection efforts began in March of 2021 and continued to June 2024. Patrons who received services and supports (prior to the evaluation) were asked to complete the applicable version (based on child age and relationship of rater to child) of the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) for any or all children for which they were seeking direct support and assistance for from the Family Resource Center. The (SDQ) is a behavioral health screening tool (with established validity) that asks parents/caregivers to rate their child on the extent to which 25 psychological attributes/statements over the past six months are Not True, Somewhat True, or Certainly True. Sub-scale scores result in measurement of emotional symptoms, conduct problems, hyperactivity/inattention, and peer relationship problems. These four sub-scales are aggregated to generate a total difficulties score. In addition to difficulties, the SDQ also measures prosocial behavior.

Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire Data

The SDQ has three versions related to a child and youth's developmental stage. These include measures that apply to children aged 2 to 4, 4 to 10, and 11 to 17. Parent versions of these scales were used, although in two situations the rater was the grandparent who was the primary caregiver for a child. The SDQ was provided to patrons that consented to participate in the study who were seeking services and supports specific to their child(ren)². Baseline measures and follow-up measures (every 6 months) were made.

The response/participation rate was low through the evaluation period. A total (across all FRCs) 54 individual children from 35 households are represented by baseline and/or follow-up measures of the SDQ. Baseline measures were available for 52 children and at least one follow-up measure for 36 children. Overall, the age range of children (at baseline) was from 3 to 16 with an average (aggregate) age of 8.86.

Strength and Difficulties Questionnaire Participation						
Family Resource Center	Number of Children	Number of Households	Age Range of Children at Baseline*	Average Age at Baseline (STD Deviation)	Number of Baseline Measures	Number of Children with at Least One Follow-up Measure
SWAG FRC	17	15	3 to 14	8.0 (2.96)	17	10
Library Partnership	8	5	8 to 12	10.0 (1.52)	8	6
Cone Park	11	4	5 to 16	10.6 (3.37)	10	7
NorthStar	18	11	5 to 15	8.4 (2.94)	17	13
Total (All FRCs)	54	35	3 to 16	8.86 (2.95)	52	36

*The specific age of a child was not documented in four baseline measures, include one child from NSFRC and three from CPLRC.

The SDQ has established thresholds for interpreting each sub-scale and total difficulties scores using two classification methods. The four band categorization method is used for this study where each difficulty sub-scale and total difficulty score is classified as either *Close to Average*, *Slightly Raised*, *High*, or *Very High* (with respect to symptomology); and the Prosocial scale score is classified at *Close to Average*, *Slightly Lowered*, *Low*, or *Very Low*. Although the percentage (a majority) of children that score in the *Close to Average* range (see table below) for each difficulty and strength ranges from a low of 63.5% (for *Total Difficulties* scores) to a high of 73.1% (for *Conduct Problem* scores), **50% (n=26) of all children score at least one high or very high rating on a difficulties scale or low or very low on the Prosocial scale.**

Percentage of SDQ Sub-Scale and Total Difficulties Scores by Classification Level at Baseline (N=52)							
Score Classification	Emotional Problems Scores	Conduct Problems Scores	Hperactivity Scores	Peer Problems Scores	Total Diffciulties Scores	Score Classification	ProSocial Scores
Close to Average	71.2	73.1	71.2	69.2	63.5	Close to Average	69.2
Slightly Raised	5.8	5.8	13.5	3.8	13.5	Slightly Lowered	13.5
High	19.2	15.4	7.7	11.5	9.6	Low	7.7
Very High	3.8	5.8	7.7	15.4	13.5	Very Low	9.6
Total (All FRCs)*	100	100.1	100.1	99.9	100.1	Total (All FRCs)	100

* Note that total percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding error.

Pre-Post Tests with SDQ Data: Baseline, Follow-up, and Impact Measures

As denoted above, there are 36 children for whom at least one follow-up SDQ measure was completed. For two of these children, there is no matched baseline measure. These two children had a parent that rated a sibling at baseline; they were added when the parent was asked to complete a 6-month follow-up of that sibling(s). Subsequently, there is an aggregate of 34 children for which baseline and follow-up SDQ measures exist. The table below suggests that among the 34 children rated, there is a general trend in reduction in the percentage of children that score *Close to Average* on SDQ each subscale and total difficulties scale, with a redistribution of scores to the other three categories (including *High* and *Very High*). A series of Chi-Square tests (Pearson's and Likelihood Ratio) suggests that these observed shifts in distribution across categories over time is statistically significant. When the change in average subscale and total difficulty scores are examined (using paired-samples T-tests), there is no statistically significant change in the average SDQ scores for each. These differences in significance using separate statistical tests are a by-product of the classification of data (for each test) and variance in the range of scores counted for each category/level of symptomology measured by the SDQ.

Pre and Post Percentages of SDQ Sub-Scale and Total Difficulties Scores by Classification Level Pre and Post (N=34)

Score Classification	Emotional Problems Scores (Pre Post)	Conduct Problems Scores (Pre Post)	Hperactivity Scores (Pre Post)	Peer Problems Scores (Pre Post)	Total Diffciulties Scores (Pre Post)	Score Classification	ProSocial Scores (Pre Post)
Close to Average	73.5 55.6	70.6 55.6	67.6 61.1	67.6 58.3	61.8 55.6	Close to Average	70.6 61.1
Slightly Raised	5.9 16.7	8.8 25.0	14.7 19.4	5.9 11.3	14.7 16.7	Slightly Lowered	8.8 16.7
High	17.6 22.2	17.6 8.3	8.8 8.3	8.8 16.7	11.8 8.3	Low	8.8 11.1
Very High	2.9 5.6	2.9 11.3	8.8 11.1	17.6 13.9	11.8 19.4	Very Low	11.8 11.1
Total (All FRCs)*	99.9 100.1	99.9 100.2	99.9 99.9	99.9 100.2	100.1 100	Total (All FRCs)	100 100

* Note that total percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding error.

The SDQ follow-up measure attempts to additional gauge perceived impact of services and supports received by the parent and child. When asked after 6 months to rate change in their child's problems since coming to the FRC, 4 (of 36; 11.1%) parents/caregivers said their children's problems were *A Bit Worse* or *Much Worse*, 11 (30.6%) indicated the problems were *About the Same*, with 21 (58.3%) suggesting their problems were *A Bit Better* or *Much Better*. For the 16 children rated after one year, 3 (18.8%) indicated the problems were *About the Same*, with 13 (81.2%) suggesting their problems were *A Bit Better* or *Much Better*. There were only 4 measures after 1 and a half years and one measure following two years of involvement, with all but one at 2 years suggesting their child's problems were *A Bit Better* or *Much Better*.

When asked the extent to which the FRC has been helpful in other ways, including making the problems experienced with their child more bearable after 6 months, 6 (of 36; 16.7%) suggested assistance was *Not at All* helpful, 20 (55.6%) suggested the FRC was *A Little* or *A Medium Amount* helpful, and 10 (27.8%) indicted the FRC assistance was *A Great Deal* helpful.

Gauging Representativeness of Existing Study Sample

The number of study participants (n=245) is very low in contrast with the total number of non-duplicate (verified) count of total patrons (2.0% of N=12,343) that received services across all FRCs between 2021 and 2023. Participation was voluntary. The response rate was low despite developed efforts to engage with (including the use of incentives) and inform all patrons seeking services of evaluation efforts, including participation in the collection of outcome data involving survey activities. Limited participation was influenced by a number of factors, including (but not limited to): the impact of COVID upon service delivery and in-person dissemination and engagement efforts, the fact that 48.5% (n=5,991) of total (identified) patrons sought services only once during the three year period, and general resistance/inherent concern of patrons within the communities served (corroborated through qualitative means/interviews) to participate in research/evaluation studies and/or disclosure of personal information to any third party.

Regardless, equivalency tests were conducted to aid in understanding how the study sample differs from the total population on select variables. The percentage of females represented in the study (79.8%) was significantly higher from those patrons that were not in the study (67.5%), with the percentage of males in the study (20.2%) being significantly lower than the proportion of males not in the study (31.9%). Among the three most represented race/ethnic groups, the percentage of patrons in the study versus not in the study that self-identified as Black or African American (non-Hispanic origin) (75.6% and 65.3% respectively) and White (non-Hispanic) patrons (14.0% and 21.7% respectively) were significantly different with an overrepresentation of Black patrons and underrepresentation of White patrons in the study. The observed differences in representation of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin in versus excluded from the study (6.2% and 7.3% respectively) did not differ significantly².

Further, a series of independent samples t-tests (both equal and non-equal variances assumed) found a significant difference in the average age of patrons, where those in the study were (on average) older (Mean=47.13 years) than those not in the study (Mean=39.81 years). Finally, those in the study (see table below) also had a significantly greater average number of service requests at resource centers between 2021 and 2023 for services associated with Concrete Supports, Parental Resilience, Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development, Social Connections, and all Protective Factor categories combined. For example, on average, study participants requested 27.24 Concrete Supports and 35.58 total services between 2021 and 2023 in contrast to 3.35 and 5.11 (respectively) from non-study patrons. Study participants had accessed services and supports on an exponentially greater scale than non-participants suggesting a higher level of expressed need and greater contact and familiarity with FRC operations.

Gauging Representativeness of Existing Study Sample

Table 1: Average Number of Service Request Comparisons Between Patrons Enrolled in Outcome Evaluation and Other Patrons (2021-2023)

Protective Factor Service Categories	In Study Group	Mean / Average	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	T-Test Statistic (Unequal Variance Assumption)	p-value (two-sided)
Concrete Support in Times of Need	No (N=12,097)	3.35	7.132	0.065	-11.32	<.001
	Yes (N=245)	27.24	32.988	2.108		
Parental Resilience	No (N=12,097)	0.23	0.768	0.007	-7.67	<.001
	Yes (N=245)	2.47	4.552	0.29		
Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development	No (N=12,097)	0.07	0.599	0.005	-4.3	<.001
	Yes (N=245)	0.53	1.688	0.108		
Social and Emotional Competence of Children	No (N=12,097)	1.16	12.417	0.113	1.04	0.297
	Yes (N=245)	0.9	3.359	0.215		
Social Connections	No (N=12,097)	0.3	4.992	0.045	-2.58	0.01
	Yes (N=245)	4.45	25.127	1.608		
All Categories of Services Combined	No (N=12,097)	5.11	15.831	0.144	-10.07	<.001
	Yes (N=245)	35.58	47.294	3.022		

¹This project is IRB approved (Advarra IRB: Children's Bureau, Protocol Number PSF-2021-CB). For more detailed information regarding the evaluation protocol and study methodology, please see Perry, R. (2021). *Family Resource Center Model Evaluation*, Protocol Number PSF-2021-CB. Tallahassee: Institute for Child and Family Services Research.

²Z-score calculations for two independent proportions were used. For Black and African American population proportion comparisons $z = -3.34$, $p = .00084$. The result is significant at $p < .05$. For White population proportion comparisons $z = 2.8713$, $p = .0041$. The result is significant at $p < .05$. For Test for Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin population proportion comparisons $z = 0.676$, $p = .4965$. The result is not significant at $p < .05$.



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.

Suggested Citation: Perry, R. (2024). *Child Strengths and Difficulties Outcomes: Final Data Report (March 2021-June 2024)* Partnership for Strong Families' Family Resource Centers. Tallahassee: Institute for Child and Family Services Research.