

FOCUSING ON ACTION: STRENGTHENING FAMILIES SELF-ASSESSMENT (SFSA) JULY 2023 UPDATES FOR THE SWAG FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER (SWAG FRC)

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The SWAG SFSA Process



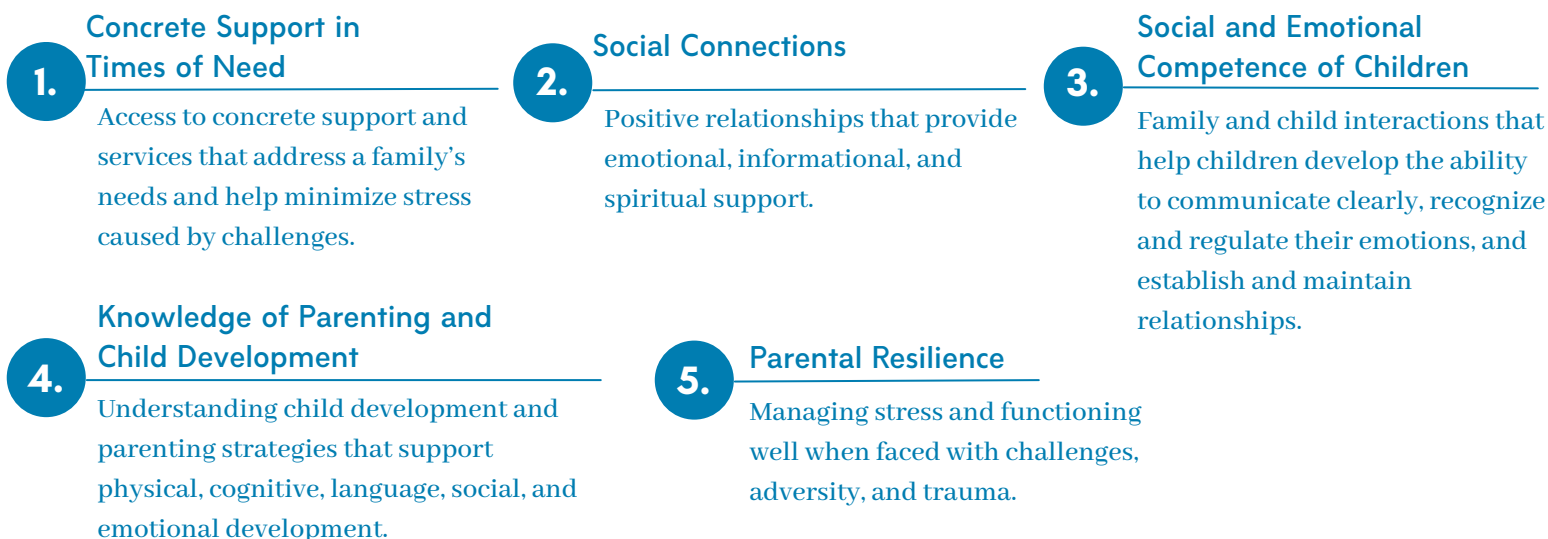
The purpose of the SFSA process was to evaluate Resource Center practices, programs, and services based on the Strengthening Families Protective Factors Framework. The SWAG Family Resource Center (FRC)'s SFSA team consisted of 2 direct service staff members, 3 community collaborators from partner organizations, and 4 Community Ambassadors who utilize services and programs at the SWAG FRC. Team members completed a survey with questions related to the implementation of each protective factor at the SWAG FRC. The SFSA team came together for critical discussion and dialog to assess each item and develop action items to address any gaps in programs, services, or Resource Center practices. SWAG FRC staff have been working hard to implement action items with the allotted resources and staff capacities. Updates on action items and plans were categorized into four key themes determined by the SWAG SFSA team for the future and are provided in this report. The key themes are:

- **Theme One:** Peer-to-Peer led trainings, a speaker series and parent support nights.
- **Theme Two:** Increase awareness by utilizing key community members and improving messaging to the community.
- **Theme Three:** Increase engagement with SWAG FRC programs, local businesses, schools, fathers/males, diverse populations, patrons in the planning process for programs.
- **Theme Four:** Begin hosting social connection events, community events and parent-only activities, once appropriate, considering safety and public health recommendations.

It is important to recognize that SWAG FRC staff have focused on enhancing services and supports, some action items have been explored but progress has been limited due to funding and staff related restrictions.

It is important to note that any denoted updates apply to the time-period since the last bi-annual update in January 2023. Additionally, for action items related to the Social and Emotional Competence of Children protective factor, there are recommendations in lieu of action items as the team determined the SWAG FRC staff's recommendations would be better served in this area due to their experience. Action items were developed while discussing the team's Strengthening Families Self-Assessment Tool results and are listed in this report with their associated protective factor, however, action items may overlap with another protective factor or theme.

Core Meanings of the Center for the Study of Social Policy's Protective Factors¹



¹ Center for the Study of Social Policy. (2015). Core Meanings of the Strengthening Families Protective Factors.

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The contents of this project do not necessarily represent the official views of the Children's Bureau.

SWAG FRC'S ACTION ITEM KEY THEME UPDATES



THEME ONE: DEVELOP PEER-TO-PEER LED TRAININGS, A SPEAKER SERIES, AND PARENT SUPPORT NIGHTS.

Overarching Action Item: Create a dynamic speaker series and/or programs to reach two audiences - parents and youth.

Action Item Update: SWAG FRC has partnered with Anthony Ray; creator of the “Dad, Can We Talk?” podcast series to provide engagement with fathers within the Southwest Gainesville community once a month during Community Dinner. SWAG FRC has also started hosting a Safe Space for LGBTQIA+ patrons on Tuesdays.

Social Connections Action Item: Explore opportunities for the development of parent support groups and mentoring opportunities that are parent centered. Consideration may be given to the implementation of a “parent support night” following discussions with parents and Community Ambassadors.

Action Item Update: SWAG FRC started their Parent Power Workshop in April 2023. This once monthly program allows parents to come together to share stories and advice with each other regarding different topics. Planned topics for the next three months include potty training, IEPs and 504 plans, and sleep training basics.

Parental Resilience Action Item: Explore means and mechanisms for Community Ambassadors to participate in training opportunities.

Action Item Update: SWAG FRC has hosted five CPR/AED training courses over the last six months, with classes planned for August and September 2023. The SWAG FRC team are looking to participate in a Mental Health First Aid training at Meridian Behavioral Healthcare in the coming months.

Concrete Supports in Times of Need Action Item: Explore a peer-to-peer training program, created by and for community members, related to getting needed supports and resources and how to act in a collective manner to advocate for each other.

Action Item Update: The SWAG FRC offers various programs allowing for peer-to-peer support and training including the Parent Power Workshop and the Community Cafe. These forums allow patrons to share their experiences and knowledge with others in the community. Patrons in regular attendance to SWAG events often share their resource knowledge with new patrons and encourage them to access SWAG's services and supports. The SWAG FRC Manager, with support from the SW Advocacy Group Board, are currently working to establish a Parent & Community Advisory Council (PCAC) within the next six months. The focus of the PCAC will be to provide a community-voice and guidance related to SWAG FRC programming and events, while developing the leadership skills of those participating.

SWAG FRC'S ACTION ITEM KEY THEME UPDATES



THEME TWO: INCREASE AWARENESS BY UTILIZING KEY COMMUNITY MEMBERS AND IMPROVING MESSAGING TO THE COMMUNITY.

Parental Resilience Action Item: Utilize community members to help raise awareness of the SWAG FRC.

Action Item Update: Community members at SWAG FRC often raise awareness of the resource center via word-of-mouth and sharing the SWAG FRC monthly calendar. Staff report that patrons who frequent the SWAG FRC are often quick to help new patrons and share their knowledge with them regarding SWAG FRC's services and supports.

Parental Resilience Action Item: Reevaluate the current engagement and outreach strategies to improve messaging to parents/families/households regarding the agency (SWAG FRC).

Action Item Update: The SWAG FRC Manager has started 'SWAG! Bingo' that occurs during various community events. Each block refers to a different service or support provided at SWAG FRC and when called, more information is provided regarding that service. Flyers for events and monthly calendars are always available for patrons, and often spread around amongst the community.

Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development

Action Item: Explore the means and mechanisms by which the community can become more aware of parenting and child development supports available at the Resource Center.

Action Item Update: To explore the means and mechanisms to increase community awareness of parenting and child development supports, SWAG FRC will be implementing Girls on the Run for a second session. A new grandparent program where the elderly read to children and help them with their homework has also been implemented, as well as a nutrition and cooking class through Feeding Florida. Adult patrons at SWAG FRC will also be creating a SWAG Cookbook with instructions on how to cook various meals using ingredients often found in food pantries.

Social and Emotional Competence of Children

Recommendation: Help spread awareness of social and emotional programming by advertising the open-door policy on applications for children's programming. The open-door policy reflects consistent efforts of staff to communicate with parents that they are welcome to approach staff at any time with questions or concerns regarding their children, programming, and supports available for children at the FRC and in the community.

Recommendation Update: Language regarding the open-door policy was added to the homework help and summer camp applications beginning in January 2023. Moving forward, parents and caregivers will be required to attend an orientation for homework help and summer camp to ensure understanding of the policies and give caregivers a chance to ask questions of their own.



ACTIONS TO FOCUS ON MOVING FORWARD

The following action items will continue to be focused on with updates provided semi-annually.

Parental Resilience Action Item: Formalize a communication channel between the SW Advocacy Group Board and the members of the Strengthening Families Self-Assessment Team.

SWAG FRC'S ACTION ITEM KEY THEME UPDATES



THEME THREE: INCREASE ENGAGEMENT WITH SWAG FRC PROGRAMS, LOCAL BUSINESSES, SCHOOLS, FATHERS/MALES, DIVERSE POPULATIONS, AND PATRONS IN THE PLANNING PROCESS FOR PROGRAMS.

Parental Resilience Action Item: Increase engagement with local businesses and schools to promote the Resource Center.

Action Item Update: The SW Advocacy Group hosted a Back-to-School Block Party at SWAG FRC in August 2023, where three local elementary schools and one local middle school came to talk with families in the community who may be enrolled at those schools. Local hairdressers and barbers attended to provide free haircuts, Gas South provided volunteers, and O2B Kids offered face painting. The SWAG FRC is also working with the City of Gainesville to provide free laundry nights at five local laundromats. SWAG has also developed a stronger relationship with the local sheriff's office.

Parental Resilience Action Item: Recruit more fathers to utilize the services and programs at the SWAG FRC.

Action Item Update: In February 2023, Anthony Ray, creator of the "Dad, Can We Talk?" podcast began a monthly dynamic speaker series during SWAG FRC's Community Dinner to engage more fathers at SWAG FRC. Staff continue to increase awareness and encourage more fathers to participate in SWAG FRC's events and services.

Parental Resilience Action Item: Strengthen partnerships with local organizations such as Meridian Behavioral Health to provide mental health support for the community.

Action Item Update: Meridian Behavioral Healthcare continues to be onsite at the SWAG FRC once a week to spread awareness of their services and connect the community to mental health resources. Staff will also refer patrons to the Equal Access Clinic for free healthcare, or Impower for virtual mental health services. SWAG FRC staff will also assist patrons in lengthier application processes to access these services.

Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development

Action Item: Ensure that value is placed on peer-to-peer programs and services that are most needed and wanted by parents in the community.

Action Item Update: Over the last six months, SWAG FRC has developed peer-to-peer programs for parents including the Parent Power Workshop and Community Café. These recurring events allow patrons to relax, connect, and share stories and information with one another. These are also forums for patrons to bring up topics and ideas to SWAG FRC staff regarding SWAG functioning and programs.

SWAG FRC'S ACTION ITEM KEY THEME UPDATES



THEME THREE: INCREASE ENGAGEMENT WITH SWAG FRC PROGRAMS, LOCAL BUSINESSES, SCHOOLS, FATHERS/MALES, DIVERSE POPULATIONS, AND PATRONS IN THE PLANNING PROCESS FOR PROGRAMS.

Social and Emotional Competence of Children

Recommendation: Enhance understanding and appreciation for individuals from different cultures, ethnicities, sexual orientations, languages, and cultural expressions; and include volunteers and interns in cultural competence trainings.

Recommendation Update: The SWAG FRC staff utilize a warm and nonjudgmental approach to assisting and advocating for patrons. Several staff members speak at least two languages, including English, Spanish, and Farsi. The SWAG FRC continues to have “All Are Welcome” LGBTQIA+ stickers throughout the center and the FRC Manager is planning a Pride Celebration in October. The SWAG FRC bulletin board has rotating themes which have included mental health in marginalized groups and men’s mental health.

Social and Emotional Competence of Children

Recommendation: Enhance trainings to include competence of environmental and economic factors and how these factors come into play in social and emotional development.

Recommendation Update: The SWAG FRC team previously had Mental Health First Aid training, which they would like to have again in the next six months. As possible, new interns moving forward will be given a tour of Grace Marketplace, a low-barrier shelter in the area, to expose them to the environment and economic reality of many patrons we serve.



ACTIONS TO FOCUS ON MOVING FORWARD

The following action items will continue to be focused on with updates provided semi-annually.

Parental Resilience Action Item: Create a Youth Advisory Council (YAC) to advise the SWAG FRC.

Parental Resilience Action Item: Host social connection events with themes catered towards fathers.

Social Connections Action Item: Explore the creation of a Community Advisory Council (CAC) with broad representation of community members who are motivated to serve the community and enhance supports for its members. Special attention should be paid to ensure the inclusion of fathers and grandfathers on this advisory committee.

Parental Resilience Action Item: Create a Parent Advisory Committee (PAC) or Community Advisory Community (CAC) to advise the SWAG FRC.

Parental Resilience Action Item: Explore what the organizational framework would be in terms of engagement and program planning that involves patrons.

SWAG FRC'S ACTION ITEM KEY THEME UPDATES



THEME FOUR: BEGIN HOSTING SOCIAL CONNECTION EVENTS, COMMUNITY EVENTS, AND PARENT-ONLY ACTIVITIES, ONCE APPROPRIATE, CONSIDERING SAFETY AND PUBLIC HEALTH RECOMMENDATIONS.

Parental Resilience Action Item: Host a community event to talk about gun violence that can serve to help connect the community with grief counselors.

Action Item Update: The SWAG FRC team are planning to host a gun violence awareness event in late 2023.

Social Connections Action Item: The SWAG FRC needs to reinstate and expand social connection/community events once it is safe to do so, given currently safety and public health concerns.

Action Item Update: All social connection and community events have been reinstated. Current community events and/or recurring services providing social connections include Community Dinner, Community Café, and the Dad's Group speaker series with Anthony Ray. The SWAG FRC Manager is planning to have therapy dogs circulating at community events for patrons, in hopes that this will be a gateway for further mental health assistance.

Social Connections Action Item: Ensure that patrons have supportive and responsive means and mechanism to openly communicate with and/or inform the staff about any knowledge or skill sets they believe staff should have to better serve the community.

Action Item Update: Patron satisfaction surveys have always been available at the SWAG FRC, and staff continue to ensure each visitor is aware of the option to provide feedback and openly communicate with staff so that the community can be better served. Community Café, which occurs every Wednesday, gives patrons a forum to communicate with staff and community members regarding their ideas. The SWAG FRC has many community members and patrons that volunteer at the center, so other community members feel comfortable communicating their thoughts and opinions to individuals they recognize from the community.

THE SWAG FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER

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