



TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

The Bush School

of Government & Public Service

**2024-2025 Philanthropy Southwest Capstone
Social Return on Investment Final Report**

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Acknowledgments

Our team would like to express our sincere gratitude to Philanthropy Southwest for sponsoring this project, which focused on assessing the Social Return on Investment (SROI) of philanthropic support for child wellness initiatives. Without the dedicated support and leadership of Philanthropy Southwest's Executive Vice President, Mallory Driggers, this project would not have been achievable.

We also extend heartfelt thanks to our capstone advisor, Dr. William Brown, for his invaluable guidance, insights, and consistent encouragement throughout the project's duration.

We owe special thanks to the numerous academic experts, program practitioners, and nonprofit professionals who generously participated in our interviews, sharing their insights and expertise. Their contributions have significantly enriched our understanding and greatly enhanced the quality of our analysis.

About the Capstone

This capstone project provides Philanthropy Southwest (PSW) with a comprehensive Social Return on Investment (SROI) analysis of philanthropic investments in child wellness and family stability programs, particularly emphasizing interventions delivered by Family Resource Centers (FRCs) in the southwestern United States. Our analysis assesses both the economic and social outcomes generated by programs such as Parents as Teachers (PAT), highlighting the measurable impacts on reducing child abuse and neglect, improving school readiness, and promoting financial stability among families. By integrating quantitative data from robust evaluations and qualitative insights from expert interviews, this project delivers actionable insights to inform strategic philanthropic decision-making and maximize the positive social impact of future investments.

Mission

This capstone's mission statement is to empower philanthropic leaders by creating guides that demonstrate philanthropic impact and facilitate strategic and practical giving within the Southwest region.

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Executive Summary

Overview

Students from the Bush School of Government and Public Service at Texas A&M University partnered with Philanthropy Southwest (PSW) to conduct a Social Return on Investment (SROI) analysis of philanthropic investments supporting child wellness. This report presents the findings of one capstone team that focused on evaluating Family Resource Centers (FRCs), community-based organizations that provide wraparound services to families, to assess their potential to reduce child neglect and promote family stability. Recognizing that families rarely face a single, isolated challenge, the team identified Parents as Teachers (PAT), an evidence-based program often implemented through FRCs, as the focus of the SROI analysis.

The analysis found that PAT generates strong economic and social returns. For every \$1 invested in PAT, an estimated \$3.56 in social value is returned, primarily through improved school readiness, reduced child abuse and neglect, and increased financial stability for parents. These findings support clear recommendations for funders: continue supporting PAT implementation through FRCs and invest in long-term research to capture additional benefits.

Literature Review

Child neglect is a pressing issue threatening the well-being and development of children across the United States. In 2022, an estimated 558,899 children were victims of abuse and neglect, equating to 8 out of every 1,000 children (National Children's Alliance, 2023). The data and theoretical frameworks show the urgent need for comprehensive interventions to address the multifaceted causes of child neglect. Addressing this requires interventions that go beyond surface-level solutions, focusing instead on alleviating financial pressures, improving access to essential services, and fostering social cohesion within communities. By implementing comprehensive support and strategies, we can help empower families to provide safer, more stable environments for their children.

Exploring Key Interventions

We explored the following interventions to support low-income families to help increase family stability and reduce situations that could lead to neglect.

- **Strengthening Economic Supports:** Programs like the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and Child Tax Credit (CTC) can alleviate financial stress.
- **Access to Quality Healthcare:** Ensuring families have access to healthcare to prevent untreated health issues can help prevent neglect.
- **Increase Food Security:** Programs like SNAP are effective in helping families access food, which is important for child development.
- **Parent Training Programs:** Parenting classes can equip parents with skills to foster healthy child development and manage stress.
- **Job Training and Employment Support:** Helps parents secure stable, well-paying jobs, which can lift families out of poverty.
- **Housing Programs:** Ensuring stable housing through subsidies or affordable housing

programs can prevent the stressors that lead to neglect.

Family Resource Centers

Family Resource Centers (FRCs) are community-based organizations that offer a wide range of services designed to support families, strengthen their capacities, and prevent crises that could lead to child maltreatment. The success of FRCs stems from their integrated service delivery model, proactive and family-centered approach, and strong community partnerships, which together create a comprehensive intervention strategy for families in need.

Our Conclusion Toward FRCs

After examining various interventions to support low-income families and mitigate the risk of neglect, we identified several critical factors and programs that play a key role in family well-being. However, more than focusing on just one of these interventions in isolation is required to support families fully. For this reason, we selected FRCs as our primary intervention. Unlike isolated interventions, FRCs are uniquely equipped to deliver sustainable support that comprehensively helps families provide supportive environments.

Logic Model

We developed a logic model for FRCs that describes required inputs and key program activities and proposes outputs, outcomes, and impacts.

Program Activities

Our logic model proposes a set of program activities that include evidence-based parenting and support programs, child development activities, financial and housing assistance, basic supports, health and wellness, and employment services.

Outcomes

We listed several outcomes and sub-outcomes in our logic model that represent the tangible benefits families are expected to experience as a result of their engagement with FRCs, including:

- Increased Parenting Knowledge
- Improved Awareness and Access to Services

Validating the Logic Model

We conducted 12 interviews with FRC and other expert professionals to validate our logic model.

Interviewees reinforced our literature findings that improving child wellness requires addressing multiple, interconnected needs. Professionals emphasized the importance of comprehensive, flexible models like FRCs that offer wraparound services under one roof. Interviews revealed

strong alignment between the services provided by FRCs and the activities in our logic model, with all centers offering evidence-based parenting programs (such as Parents as Teachers), basic supports, and child development activities. These insights strengthened our confidence that the holistic service approach reflected in FRC models is effective for achieving meaningful improvements in family and child well-being.

Narrowing in on Parents as Teachers

To conduct a clear and meaningful SROI analysis, we narrowed our scope to the Parents as Teachers (PAT) program. All of the FRCs we interviewed operate PAT, reinforcing our confidence in the program's effectiveness and the importance of its outcomes. PAT is a nationally recognized, evidence-based program with established credibility and clearly defined, research-backed outcomes. Specifically, its strong association with improved child readiness reinforced its value as an early intervention strategy. Additionally, the availability of a detailed budget toolkit enabled us to estimate program costs accurately, strengthening the reliability of our final SROI calculations.

SROI Methodology

To complete our SROI analysis, we first calculated the annual input costs required to operate the PAT program. We then identified financial proxies to monetize the key outcomes we chose to measure: improved school readiness, reduced child abuse and neglect, and increased financial stability for parents. The benefit for each outcome was calculated by multiplying the monetized value, supported by empirical research and validated through expert interviews, by the expected cost savings per case and the estimated number of families served annually. Finally, we summed the total benefit values across all three outcomes and divided by the program's total annual cost to determine the final SROI ratio.

Results

Input Costs

The total estimated annual cost to operate a PAT program serving 100 families in Texas is **\$389,163**. This budget, based on the PAT budget Toolkit and Texas salary averages, primarily covers personnel costs, which represent the largest share of expenses. Additional costs include program materials, family engagement activities, professional development, office operations, screenings, transportation, indirect overhead, and affiliation fees.

Outcomes

Improved School Readiness

To monetize the benefits of improved school readiness, we used data from the study "*A Benefit-Cost Analysis of the Abecedarian Early Childhood Intervention*". Because the Abecedarian program is similar to PAT in its early education focus and population served, it provided a strong

proxy for estimating outcomes. Using U.S. Census data, we estimated that 100 families would include 200 children. Based on Abecedarian findings, we applied an 18% reduction in special education placement rates as the attributable impact of the program. To estimate cost savings, we used Texas Education Agency data showing that special education costs \$9,551 more per student per year than general education. Using these values, we calculated the school readiness benefit as follows:

Improved School Readiness Benefit= Total Children * Attribution Rate * Monetized Outcome Value = 200 * 18% * \$9,551= \$343,836.

Reduced Child Abuse and Neglect

To monetize the benefits of reducing child abuse and neglect, we used data from the study “*Parents as Teachers Family Outcomes: New Insights from the Mother and Infant Home Visiting Program Evaluation*” (MIHOPE). This federally supported evaluation focused specifically on high-risk families served by Parents as Teachers (PAT) and used rigorous research methods, including propensity score matching and multivariate controls, to isolate the program’s net effects. Based on 2023 U.S. Census data, we estimated that 100 families would include 200 children. According to the MIHOPE study, the incidence of abuse or neglect was 12.4% in the control group and 5.6% in the PAT group, resulting in a 6.9% net improvement attributable to the program.

To estimate the economic value of this outcome, we used Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) data, calculating that the system response cost per child experiencing abuse or neglect is \$33,416. Using these figures, we calculated the benefit from reducing child abuse and neglect as follows:

Reducing Child Abuse and Neglect Benefit = Total Children × Attribution Rate × Monetized Outcome Value
= 200 × 6.9% × \$33,416 = \$460,937

Increased Parents' Financial Security

To monetize the benefits of increased parental financial stability, we used findings from the study “*Impact of Child Disability on Parental Employment and Labor Income*” by Wondemu, Joranger, and Brekke. This research highlights the negative economic impact on parents, particularly mothers, raising children with special needs, showing significantly reduced labor force participation and long-term earnings. Using these findings, we estimated the employment gains associated with Parents as Teachers (PAT) participation, assuming a 16% increase in employment among participating parents. Based on 2023 U.S. Census data, we estimated that 100 families would be served, and applied a conservative income proxy using the Texas Workforce Commission’s average wage data.

We used 50% of the average full-time Texas wage (\$36,296) to reflect part-time work often taken on by newly employed caregivers. Using this figure, we calculated the benefit from increased financial stability as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Increasing Parents' Financial Stability Benefit} &= \text{Total Families} \times \text{Employment Increase} \times \\ &\text{Monetized Outcome Value} \\ &= 100 \times 16\% \times \$36,296 = \$580,736 \end{aligned}$$

Final Ratio

Based on the results of this analysis, the Social Return on Investment (SROI) of the PAT program is:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{SROI} &= \frac{\text{Total Social Value}}{\text{Total Annual Program Cost}} \\ &= \frac{(\$343,836 + \$454,362 + \$580,736)}{\$389,342.30} \\ &\approx 3.54 \end{aligned}$$

This means that for every \$1 invested, the PAT program can create approximately \$3.56 in social value for society.

Limitations and Conclusions

While this SROI analysis demonstrates strong returns, approximately \$3.54 in social value for every \$1 invested, it is important to note several limitations. The analysis does not capture all potential outcomes of the Parents as Teachers (PAT) program due to data constraints and challenges in monetizing certain benefits, such as improved classroom behavior. The analysis also relies on financial proxies from secondary sources and assumes consistent implementation across sites, which may not reflect all local variations.

Recommendations

- **Sustain Investment:** Funders should continue investing in PAT programs within FRCs, particularly in areas with high rates of child neglect.
- **Communicate Value:** FRCs should use findings like this to advocate for funding and communicate their impact to stakeholders.
- **Support Further Research:** Longitudinal studies are needed to capture additional long-term benefits and refine SROI estimates.

Overall, this analysis reinforces the importance of family-centered, preventative strategies like Parents as Teachers, which support multiple aspects of child and family well-being and generate meaningful economic and social value.

Introduction

Child neglect is a challenge impacting communities across the United States, particularly affecting the long-term physical, emotional, and cognitive development of children. Despite ongoing interventions, many families continue to face multiple, interrelated challenges that increase their risk of involvement with child welfare systems. Addressing these complex issues effectively requires comprehensive and preventative strategies that extend beyond singular, isolated solutions. This report examines the role of Family Resource Centers (FRCs), specifically evaluating the Parents as Teachers (PAT) program, in providing holistic and integrated support services aimed at reducing child neglect, enhancing early childhood development, and strengthening family financial stability. Through a detailed Social Return on Investment (SROI) analysis, combined with qualitative insights from practitioners, this report illustrates the tangible impacts and broader social value generated by targeted philanthropic investments in child wellness programs.

Literature Review

Needs statement

Child neglect is a critical issue affecting the well-being and development of children in the United States. In 2021, 1,820 children lost their lives to abuse and neglect (CDC, 2024). In 2022, an estimated 558,899 children experienced abuse or neglect, equating to 8 out of every 1,000 children (National Children's Alliance, 2023). Additionally, in 2024, it was reported that one in seven children faced abuse or neglect within the past year, with many cases likely going unreported (CDC, 2024). Neglect, the most common form of maltreatment, accounts for 60.8% of reported cases. Children in low-income households face maltreatment rates five times higher than those in higher-income families (Rostad, 2020). In 2022, neglect accounted for three-quarters of child maltreatment cases, and 62% of removals were neglect-related (Casey Family Resources, 2024; Pac et al., 2023). Neglect has long-term physical, emotional, and psychological effects. Some examples include children who are neglected in physical health, cognitive development, and mental health. These children tend to fall behind their peers who are not neglected (Administration for Children and Families, 2020).

Beyond its devastating personal impact, child neglect strains social services and educational systems, necessitating comprehensive interventions such as programs to support at-risk families and create safe, nurturing environments. Addressing child neglect requires understanding systemic factors, such as the disproportionate impact on low-income families. Poverty directly increases the risk of neglect by limiting parents' ability to provide necessities like food and housing, often categorized as neglect under state law. Indirectly, financial instability raises stress levels, which can negatively impact caregiving and increase risks of mental health issues, substance abuse, and criminal justice involvement (Pac et al., 2023). Living

in high-poverty areas further exacerbates neglect risks by limiting access to resources and economic opportunities (Maguire-Jack and Sattler, 2023). Research shows that income inequality contributes to higher child maltreatment rates due to uneven resource distribution and diminished social cohesion. High-income inequality increases parental stress and reduces access to mutual support, worsening neglect risks (Zhang et al., 2021). Addressing poverty's material and social dimensions through targeted interventions is vital to reducing neglect and its long-term consequences.

The Family Stress Model (FSM) explains how economic hardship, such as low income or job loss, triggers economic pressures like difficulty paying bills and affording basic needs (Conger et al., 2002).. These financial stresses can lead to psychological distress in caregivers, including depression and anxiety, which negatively impact their parenting practices (Conger et al., 2002). Caregivers under strain may exhibit less responsive or inconsistent parenting behaviors, which can hinder children's emotional, social, and behavioral development, ultimately affecting their overall well-being (Conger et al., 2002).. This model highlights the cascading effects of financial instability on family dynamics and child outcomes (Conger et al., 2002). Families are in crisis, and they look towards programs that have evidence of helping other families.

Interventions

Strengthening Economic Support

Strengthening economic support involves initiatives aimed at helping individuals and families achieve financial stability and improve their overall quality of life, especially during times of hardship. These efforts often take the form of direct financial assistance or tax-based benefits while helping families cover necessities like housing, childcare, and education. (Economic Strengthening, 2016).

Two key federal programs that exemplify this approach are the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and the Child Tax Credit (CTC) (What Are the Costs of Permanently Expanding the CTC and the EITC?). Introduced in 1997 through the Taxpayer Relief Act, the Child Tax Credit was designed to help families manage the costs of raising children (Crandall-Hollick). Similarly, the Earned Income Tax Credit supports low-wage working families by providing a refundable tax credit calculated as a percentage of earned income, up to a certain limit. Families within a specific income range receive the maximum benefit, which supplements low earnings and encourages employment (What Are the Costs of Permanently Expanding the CTC and the EITC?).

Unlike direct cash assistance, tax expenditures such as these tax credits reduce the taxes families owe or even provide refunds if the credit exceeds their tax bill. This structure helps reduce child poverty, incentivizes work, and keeps government spending in check. Over the years, both credits have been expanded to better support families in the face of rising living costs (Child Tax Credit; Columbia University Center on Poverty and Social Policy). The effectiveness

of these credits is supported by empirical research. For example, a study analyzing the 2015–2018 tax seasons found that every additional \$1,000 in combined tax credit payments was associated with a 5% decline in state-level child maltreatment report rates in the week and four weeks following the payments (Kovski et al., 2022). Moreover, families earning under \$25,000 per year are three times more likely to lack healthcare access than those earning over \$100,000, highlighting the broader consequences of financial insecurity. Expanding tax benefits for low-income families could reduce the child poverty rate by 9.2% (Kim et al., 2023). Notably, the 2021 American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) made the Child Tax Credit fully refundable and increased benefit amounts, a move projected to cut the child poverty rate by 34.1% (Kim et al., 2023). These findings underscore that while expanding tax credits carries fiscal costs, the long-term benefits, such as reducing child poverty and promoting family financial stability, are substantial and far-reaching

Access to Quality Healthcare

Quality healthcare is about more than affordability and speed—it requires continuous care, preventive services, safety measures, teamwork among providers, and active patient involvement. Streamlined processes reduce delays, while equitable access ensures everyone can receive care regardless of income. Yet, lower-income communities often face challenges, such as fewer primary care providers and shorter life expectancies compared to higher-income groups, underscoring the need for equity (Commonwealth Fund, 2021). Those above the poverty line in the U.S. live seven years longer on average than those below it (Bodenheimer et al.). Factors shaping health outcomes include health behaviors (30%), such as diet and exercise; clinical care (20%), including access to quality services; social and economic elements (40%), such as income, education, and community support; and the physical environment (10%), like air quality and housing (County Health Rankings, 2024). Disparities persist, with families lacking resources often unable to afford basic healthcare. In 2022, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services adopted initiatives to address social determinants of health, including building a robust data infrastructure, improving access and affordability, fostering partnerships between healthcare providers and community organizations, and engaging public-private partnerships. Nonprofits like the Episcopal Health Foundation in Texas have also prioritized non-medical factors crucial for maintaining a healthy life (Episcopal Health Foundation, 2023). Tackling social determinants improves physical and mental health, reduces disparities, lowers costs, enhances workforce productivity, and fosters healthier communities (Karger & Stoesz). These efforts ensure everyone has equitable opportunities for optimal health.

Expanding healthcare accessibility relies heavily on affordability. To address gaps in insurance coverage and healthcare costs, the government has introduced public programs like Medicaid and the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP). Medicaid assists low-income individuals and families, including children, pregnant women, elderly individuals, and people with disabilities (Karger & Stoesz). Children’s Health Insurance Program supports low- and

moderate-income children, as well as some pregnant women, who earn too much to qualify for Medicaid but still require help (Karger & Stoesz). These programs are jointly managed by the state and federal governments. Initially, the federal government covered 50-70% of Medicaid expenses, with greater funding allocated to states with lower per capita incomes (Bodenheimer et al., pg. 16). Both initiatives were designed to make healthcare more accessible and affordable for Americans (Bodenheimer et al., pg. 16).

The Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) significantly improves healthcare access for children by providing essential services like doctor visits, mental health care, and prescriptions. It alleviates financial strain on families, lowers uninsured rates, and boosts Medicaid enrollment (Paradise, 2014). CHIP enhances health outcomes, reduces child mortality, and supports families in achieving financial stability. Medicaid, on the other hand, serves low-income Americans, covering 82 million individuals in 2022, while CHIP specifically aids children from low-income families, covering 7 million children the same year (Bodenheimer et al., pg. 16). Over the long term, these programs promote independence and decrease reliance on government aid (Paradise, 2014). As of November 2024, approximately 37.5 million individuals were enrolled in CHIP or were children covered under Medicaid, accounting for 47.5% of total program enrollment across the United States (November 2024).

Increasing food security

Food security ensures that everyone consistently has access to safe and nutritious food (Food Security). When this access is lacking, food insecurity arises, which can severely impact children's health and development. It has been associated with lower cognitive abilities, behavioral challenges, and emotional struggles (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2015). Furthermore, children who live in low-income food-insecure households are at a higher risk of developmental problems that impair their school functioning (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2015). Addressing this issue requires ensuring low-income families have access to programs that improve food security.

The first very well-known program that has helped families is the Public Assistance programs, like the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), which helps low-income families buy food. It provides financial assistance through an electronic benefits card, which can be used to purchase groceries, ensuring access to nutritious meals and reducing food insecurity (Johnson-Motoyama et al., 2022). Additionally, another well-known program that helps families is the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program, which provides supplemental foods, nutrition education, and health referrals for pregnant/postpartum women and young children (Karger and Stoesz). The Women, Infants, and Children program promotes healthier pregnancies and reduces infant mortality by improving prenatal care, birth outcomes, and nutrition. A program that helps school-aged children is the National School Lunch Program

(NSLP) offers free or reduced-price lunches to eligible K–12 students which making sure no school-going child is hungry (Karger and Stoesz).

Both the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and the Women, Infants, and Children programs have been proven as effective. The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program has proven effective in reducing food insecurity, reducing children’s food insecurity in low-income households by 33 percent (FRAC, 2018). Public assistance programs like the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program have also proven effective in reducing child poverty and welfare involvement, particularly through policies that make benefits more accessible. Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program is one of the largest public assistance programs in the U.S., and when states adopt income generosity options, it can significantly stabilize household resources and reduce child protective services involvement and foster care placements (Johnson-Motoyama et al., 2022). The income generosity policies for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program include raising the income eligibility limit, simplifying reporting requirements, and other adjustments that make the program more accessible to low-income families (Johnson-Motoyama et al., 2022). States that adopt these policies have seen estimated reductions in child protective services and foster care caseloads ranging from 7.6% to 14.3% for every 5% increase in Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program participation (Johnson-Motoyama et al., 2022). This program offers electronic benefits for purchasing groceries at authorized retailers’ children (Karger and Stoesz). Within the first 60 days after birth, it generates healthcare cost savings ranging from \$1.77 to \$3.13. The program enhances child growth and development by significantly reducing iron deficiency rates from 7.8% to 2.8% during its early implementation and improving diets. Breastfeeding rates among WIC infants at six months increased by 61.2%, rising from 12.9% to 20.8%. Additionally, 90% of non-breastfed infants received an iron-fortified formula, essential for their first year of life. WIC also supports regular medical care, immunizations, and school readiness by fostering intellectual development and long-term health in children (How WIC helps 2024). These programs have helped make sure families are not going hungry.

Quality Early Childhood Education

High-quality early childhood education offers a nurturing environment that supports young children's physical, social, emotional, and intellectual growth (Children's learning and development...2023). It also plays a vital role in improving childcare quality and advancing children’s cognitive and socioemotional development. By fostering safe, stable, and supportive settings, including within homes, early childhood education creates a strong foundation for lifelong well-being (Fortson et al.). Engaging families in preschool programs is vital, as parental involvement significantly supports child development and educational success (Fortson et al.). High-quality programs particularly benefit economically disadvantaged children by providing a foundation for learning while supporting parents (Fortson et al.).

A well-known early education program is called Head Start. Head Start is a free, federally funded program that provides essential services such as early childhood education, health, nutrition, and parental support to low-income children and families (Bailey, Sun, & Timpe, 2021). It focuses on promoting school readiness for children from birth to age 5 by enhancing their cognitive, social, and emotional development. Operated by local agencies, the program aims to help children from low-income families thrive in school and later in life (Bailey, Sun, & Timpe, 2021). Head Start's efforts also reduce abuse, neglect, and other negative outcomes (Fortson et al.). Long-term studies show that participants enjoy higher educational attainment, full-time employment rates, and decreased criminal justice involvement, among other societal benefits, with an economic return of \$10.83 for every dollar invested (Fortson et al.). Overall, accredited early childhood programs are essential for improving children's development and well-being (Fortson et al.).

Head Start has profound and lasting effects on disadvantaged children by enhancing their human capital and economic self-sufficiency. Participants experience better life outcomes, which lead to increased tax contributions and decreased reliance on social assistance (Bailey, Sun, & Timpe, 2021). Research has shown Head Start's remarkable public value, as the program's long-term benefits significantly outweigh its costs. Investing in Head Start not only supports individual growth but also yields societal and economic advantages. Improved access to education, nutrition, and healthcare for children helps break intergenerational cycles of poverty, paving the way for a brighter future (Bailey, Sun, & Timpe, 2021). Participants of Head Start show notable achievements in various areas. On average, they gain an additional 0.65 years of education, with high school completion rates increasing by 2.7%. College enrollment rises by 8.5%, while college completion rates improve by 39% (Bailey, Sun, & Timpe, 2021). Employment outcomes are enhanced, with participants working more weeks and hours (Bailey, Sun, & Timpe, 2021). These gains lead to reduced poverty levels and decreased reliance on public assistance. Furthermore, Head Start fosters a significant increase in human capital, with an 18% improvement in skills and capabilities, and economic self-sufficiency rises by 9% (Bailey, Sun, & Timpe, 2021). These findings underscore the program's effectiveness in transforming lives and strengthening communities.

Parenting Support and Education

Parenting support includes activities and services that provide guidance, advice, and assistance to parents and caregivers (About NPEN). This intervention is essential for enhancing children's well-being and reducing neglect. By offering evidence-based courses, it strengthens parenting skills, improves mental health, and fosters healthier family environments, especially for families under financial strain and high stress (Maltais et al., 2018; El-Banna et al., 2021). Material hardships, such as housing or food shortages, heighten parental stress and neglect risks. Addressing these difficulties improves parenting course effectiveness and supports children's development (Thomas & Waldfogel, 2022).

Programs like "Incredible Years" teach behavior management, stress relief techniques, and conflict resolution while building support networks for vulnerable families (El-Banna et al., 2021). Additionally, other Parenting support programs provide A range of resources to help families navigate the challenges of raising children. These include structured workshops and classes that educate parents on child development, positive parenting techniques, and strategies for managing difficult behaviors (Trautner, 2023). Home visiting programs provide personalized, in-home guidance from professionals, offering extra support to families in need. Parenting support groups create safe spaces where parents can share experiences, exchange knowledge, and find encouragement (Trautner, 2023). Additionally, online resources and platforms offer access to information, articles, videos, and virtual communities, providing valuable parenting advice and support (Trautner, 2023).

Overall, such interventions strengthen family functioning and create healthier environments for children. Ensuring the health, safety, well-being, and economic stability of children and their parents supports positive outcomes throughout childhood and into adulthood. These efforts enhance student performance, reduce risky behaviors, foster academic development, and create a nurturing family environment that promotes overall family well-being (*Benefits of parenting education*).

Job Training and Employment Support

Job training and employment support provide services to help individuals gain skills, knowledge, and assistance to thrive in the workforce (El-Banna et al., 2021). These programs play a crucial role in enhancing family economic stability, which in turn reduces the likelihood of Child Protective Services (CPS) involvement. These programs help parents secure stable, better-paying jobs, increasing financial independence and family stability (Hook et al., 2016; El-Banna et al., 2021). Various independent programs offer targeted skills training, career guidance, and internships in high-demand fields, alleviating financial stress while boosting confidence and professional abilities (El-Banna et al., 2021). Often combined with counseling services, these programs address psychological burdens and enhance parents' quality of life. Follow-up services, such as job placement and stability tracking, further improve employment satisfaction and longevity.

A government program used to help Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), a federal program that provides states with block grants to support families with low incomes, primarily through cash assistance. These grants are then used by states to create their programs, which may include cash payments, job training, and other services (*What is TANF?* 2023).

Job training and employment support programs play a vital role in fostering economic stability by helping parents secure better-paying jobs, which leads to higher earnings and reduced dependence on welfare (Meyer & Pavetti, 2021). Many of these programs also provide access to

childcare services, an essential resource that enables parents, particularly single-parent families, to maintain employment. Stable jobs contribute to creating secure family environments, positively impacting children's academic performance, behavior, and overall well-being. Furthermore, better-paying jobs increase family income and enhance financial security (Alderson et al., 2008). However, a notable limitation is the lack of robust evidence on the health impacts of welfare-to-work interventions for lone parents outside of North America, as highlighted by the National Institutes of Health (Gibson et al., 2018). Together, these interventions strengthen families and support children's well-being (El-Banna et al., 2021).

Housing stability

Housing stability goes beyond avoiding homelessness, it means having reliable, safe, and affordable housing, which is crucial for the well-being of children and families. Unstable housing, such as evictions or homelessness, elevates family stress, increasing the risk of neglect and involvement with Child Protective Services (CPS), especially in low-income households (Thomas & Waldfogel, 2022). Programs like rent subsidies and tenancy stabilization reduce evictions and financial strain, fostering safer environments for children and lowering CPS intervention risks (Ruiz-Romero et al., 2022; El-Banna et al., 2021).

Legislation has played a key role in ensuring access to affordable housing. The Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) of 1986 incentivized private developers to create or rehabilitate affordable rental housing using tax credits, relying on market-driven solutions to efficiently deliver public goods. Similarly, the Quality Housing & Work Responsibility Act (QHWRA) of 1998 aimed to encourage work, reduce poverty concentration, and improve public housing through tools like work requirements, flexible rent options, income mixing, and program streamlining (Karger and Stoesz). It emphasized promoting self-sufficiency rather than long-term dependency. The Low-Income Housing Tax Credit and the Quality Housing & Work Responsibility Act have significantly contributed to improving housing stability and affordability (Karger and Stoesz). Low-Income Housing Tax Credit incentivized private developers to construct or renovate affordable rental housing by offering tax credits, employing market-driven solutions to deliver public housing (Karger and Stoesz). The Quality Housing & Work Responsibility Act focused on enhancing public housing quality, reducing poverty concentration, and promoting self-sufficiency among low-income households through tools such as work requirements, flexible rent options, income mixing, and program streamlining (Karger and Stoesz). These legislative measures have not only improved access to affordable housing but also fostered independence and stability for vulnerable populations. Moreover, housing stability has been shown to improve children's mental health, provide secure environments for growth, and strengthen family resilience when integrated with services like employment training and mental health support (El-Banna et al., 2021; Ruiz-Romero et al., 2022).

Summarizing Key Interventions Table 1

Name of intervention	Definition	Need for the program	Examples	Proven effects
Strengthening Economic Supports	Helping people achieve financial stability and a better life, especially during hardships, through direct payments or tax benefits.	Help families cover necessities like housing, childcare, and education.	The Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and Child Tax Credit (CTC) support families by lowering tax burdens or providing refunds, promoting stability, and reducing neglect or child welfare cases.	<p>* Each \$1,000 increase in Earned Income Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit payments reduces child maltreatment reports by 5%.</p> <p>* Expanding these programs significantly reduces child poverty:</p> <p>-Earned Income Tax Credit: 9.2% reduction</p> <p>-Child Tax Credit: 34.1% reduction</p>
Access to Quality Healthcare	Quality healthcare means ongoing care, prevention, safety, teamwork, patient involvement, smooth processes, fairness, and	<p>Financial challenges often lead to neglect, such as missed check-ups.</p> <p>Families earning under \$25,000 are three times more likely to lack care than those earning</p>	* Medicaid assists low-income individuals and families, including children, pregnant women, elderly individuals, and people with disabilities	<p>* Medicaid supported 82 million low-income Americans in 2022</p> <p>* The Children's Health Insurance Program covered 7 million low-income children</p>

	<p>results that show system success.</p>	<p>over \$100,000, contributing to shorter life spans.</p> <p>Key influences on health outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 40%: Social and economic factors - 30%: Health behaviors -20%: Clinical care access and quality. -10%: Physical environment 	<p>* Children's Health Insurance Program supports low- and moderate-income children, as well as some pregnant women, who earn too much to qualify for Medicaid but still require help</p> <p>* Use whole-of-government approaches, public-private nonprofit partnerships, and community engagement to tackle social determinants of health.</p>	<p>in 2022</p> <p>* The U.S. The Department of Health and Human Services develops a strong data infrastructure for care coordination and evidence-based policymaking.</p> <p>* Improve access, affordability, and equity in health care services</p>
Increase Food Security	<p>Food security means making sure everyone always has steady access to enough safe and healthy food.</p>	<p>Food insecurity poses serious risks to children's health and development, including lower cognitive function, behavior issues, emotional distress, and impaired school performance, particularly for those in low-income</p>	<p>*Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)- helps low-income individuals and families buy food. It provides financial assistance through an electronic benefits card, which can be used to purchase groceries, ensuring access</p>	<p>*Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program reduces children's food insecurity by 33% and lowers child poverty.</p> <p>*A 5% increase in Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program participation cuts CPS and foster care caseloads</p>

		households.	<p>to nutritious meals and reducing food insecurity.</p> <p>*Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program, which provides supplemental foods, nutrition education, and health referrals for pregnant/postpartum women and young children</p> <p>*National School Lunch Program (NSLP) offers free or reduced-price lunches to eligible K–12 students, which makes sure no school-going child is hungry</p>	<p>by up to 14.3%.</p> <p>*The Women, Infants, and Children program improves prenatal care, birth outcomes, and reduces infant mortality.</p> <p>*The Women, Infants, and Children program saves \$1.77 to \$3.13 in healthcare costs within 60 days post-birth.</p> <p>*The Women, Infants, and Children program enhances child growth and lowers iron deficiency from 7.8% to 2.8%.</p> <p>*Breastfeeding rates at six months rise from 12.9% to 20.8% with the Women, Infants, and Children program support.</p> <p>* The Women, Infants, and Children program ensures 90% of non-breastfed infants</p>
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				<p>receive iron-fortified formula.</p> <p>* The Women, Infants, and Children program promotes medical care, immunizations, school readiness, and long-term development.</p>
<p>Quality Early Childhood Education</p>	<p>High-quality early childhood education provides a caring space that helps young children grow physically, socially, emotionally, and intellectually.</p>	<p>Early childhood education, like Head Start, enhances child care by fostering cognitive and socioemotional development, promoting safe, stable, and nurturing relationships across childcare, educational settings, and at home.</p>	<p>*Headstart is a free, federally funded program that provides essential services such as early childhood education, health, nutrition, and parental support to low-income children and families</p>	<p>* Preschool programs offer an economic return of \$10.83 for every \$1 invested.</p> <p>*Increased schooling by 0.65 years</p> <p>*2.7% higher high school completion rate</p> <p>*8.5% higher college enrollment</p> <p>*39% higher college completion rate</p> <p>*Better employment, with more weeks and hours</p>

				<p>worked</p> <p>*Reduced poverty levels</p> <p>*Decreased reliance on public assistance</p> <p>*18% improvement in human capital (skills, education, etc.)</p> <p>*9% boost in economic self-sufficiency</p>
Parenting Support and Education	<p>Parenting support includes activities and services that provide guidance, advice, and help to parents and caregivers.</p>	<p>Parenting support and education improve children's well-being and reduce neglect. Evidence-based courses enhance parenting skills, mental health, and family environments. For financially stressed families, childcare support reduces anxiety and strengthens parenting abilities through systematic intervention.</p>	<p>* Incredible Years program-teach behavior management, stress relief techniques, and conflict resolution while building support networks</p> <p>*Structured workshops and classes that educate parents on child development, positive parenting techniques, and strategies for managing difficult behaviors</p>	<p>*Supports the health, safety, and well-being of children and parents.</p> <p>*Improves outcomes in childhood and adulthood.</p> <p>*Boosts academic success and growth.</p> <p>*Reduces harmful behaviors.</p> <p>*Creates a supportive</p>

			<p>* Home visiting programs provide personalized, in-home guidance from professionals, offering extra support to families in need.</p> <p>*Parenting support groups create safe spaces where parents can share experiences, exchange knowledge, and find encouragement</p> <p>*Online resources and platforms offer access to information, articles, videos, and virtual communities, providing valuable parenting advice and support</p>	family environment.
Job Training & Employment Supports	Job training and employment support provide services to help people develop skills, gain knowledge, and receive help to	Job training and employment support improve family finances and reduce Child Protective Services (CPS) involvement.	*Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), a federal program that provides states with block grants to support	*Job training helps parents find better-paying jobs and increase their income.

	succeed in the workforce.	Stable jobs increase financial independence, providing families with a stronger foundation. Economically disconnected families face a higher risk of foster care involvement.	families with low incomes, primarily through cash assistance. * targeted skills training, career guidance * internships in high-demand fields, alleviating financial stress while boosting confidence and professional abilities *counseling services, these programs address psychological burdens and enhance parents' quality of life.	*Parents rely less on welfare due to stable employment. *Access to childcare is provided, especially for single-parent families. *Stable jobs create a secure family environment, benefiting children's behavior and academic success. *Higher family income improves financial stability and overall well-being.
Housing Programs	Housing stability means having reliable, safe, and affordable housing, going beyond simply avoiding	Housing stability is crucial for child and family well-being. Unsafe conditions like evictions or homelessness	Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) incentivized private developers to produce	*Housing improves children's mental health and provides a secure space for growth.

	homelessness.	elevate family stress, increasing risks of neglect and CPS involvement, especially among low-income families.	affordable rental housing through tax credits, leveraging market-driven approaches for efficient public good delivery. Quality Housing & Work Responsibility Act (QHWRA) aimed to encourage work, reduce poverty concentration, and improve public housing through tools like work requirements, flexible rent options, income mixing, and program streamlining	*Comprehensive projects integrate housing, employment training, and mental health services. * These efforts enhance family resilience and boost social functioning.
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Family Resource Center's Parents as Teachers Program

Our chosen intervention and the one we find the most beneficial is Family Resource Centers (FRCs) are community-based organizations offering integrated services like housing assistance, mental health support, job training, and parenting skill development to address social and economic stressors linked to child maltreatment (Casey Family Programs, 2019). Their proactive, family-centered, and community-embedded approach builds trust, encourages early help-seeking, and strengthens protective factors, reducing child welfare involvement (White et

al., 2023). By coordinating services and leveraging local partnerships, FRCs enhance efficiency and effectiveness, supporting families' financial stability and well-being (Bayless et al., 2021). This fosters long-term stability and creates supportive environments for families and addresses all concerns in the family stress model. The reason we chose FRC as our intervention is that, unlike isolated interventions, FRCs provide a holistic system that combines financial, social, and educational support, health care, and basic needs. Family Resource Centers (FRCs) are built on the idea of a holistic system, which is why they are considered one of the most effective sources for interventions. Families often face a wide array of challenges, making it impractical to address each need with isolated resources. Instead, FRCs operate as central hubs where families can access comprehensive support. This approach allows families to connect with tailored services, empowering them to choose the specific direction that best suits their unique circumstances. By prioritizing flexibility and inclusivity, FRCs foster a supportive environment that addresses the diverse and interconnected needs of families effectively.

Family resource centers offer many programs. One program that has proven to be effective is the Parents as Teachers. This program has quantified the children's progress over time in this program. This program creates a curriculum that empowers parents to foster school readiness and the healthy development of their children. The approach is intimate and relationship-focused, embracing learning experiences tailored to the unique needs of each family and child, and this program can be done in person and virtual service delivery (*Origin story 2024*). Parents as Teachers is a program that can address all the needs of the family. This program helps families set goals for their children and figure out ways to help them reach them.

The highly trained PAT employees conduct their work using the psychology theories behind the Parents as Teachers concept. The first theory is the Bronfenbrenner ecological model and Bowen's family system theory (*Parents as Teachers (PAT), 2019*). In our interview with Dr. Radhika Viruru, Clinical Professor at TAMU's school of education and human development, has mentioned that is where the child is at the center and nested in a set of structures. She mentions the five levels of microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem that affect the child's development. This model is created to have a supportive and nurturing environment for early childhood. The Bronfenbrenner's model can be used to see what kind of mechanisms in child poverty can increase risks and affect a healthy development, as well as the overall impact of poverty on the child's life and can give more insights into finding a holistic solution to help these families (Jones & Cohen, 2000). Bowen's Family Systems Theory is described as "a way to consider the family as an emotional unit—an idea that shifted the focus from individual psychopathology to family dynamics" (*Family Systems Theory in Counseling: Key Techniques 2024*). The home visits focus on three areas of emphasis: parent-child interaction, development-centered parenting, and family well-being, and utilize these psychological theories (*Parents as Teachers (PAT)® 2019*). Parents as teachers have been proven to have qualitative results. Additionally, the Evidence-Based Home Visiting Model, employed by Parents as Teachers, is a comprehensive parent education approach. It delivers a

wide range of services to families with children from prenatal stages through kindergarten, offering valuable insights into early childhood development (*Origin story 2024*). In our interviews with Wendy Puga and Diane Fellows from Child & Family Resources in Arizona mentioned how they have employees make house visits to ensure children's safety at home and help families ensure their children's well-being. Additionally, at the home visit, the trained employees may refer the families to any resources needed as part of their referral system (*Family Support Programs Arizona: Home 2024*). These psychological theories used in PAT put the children at the center of their environment. For instance, if a child is struggling with reading, the Parents as Teachers (PAT) program can identify the issue through various screenings and refer the family to appropriate resources. This program adopts a holistic approach by addressing the children's physical needs, enabling parents to actively support their cognitive development. PAT provides a comprehensive perspective on what children require to thrive, offering families access to multiple resources such as health care, nutritional support, and education. Once referrals are made, families receive a tailored curriculum to monitor their children's progress, ensuring they stay on track with their peers and build a foundation for future success.

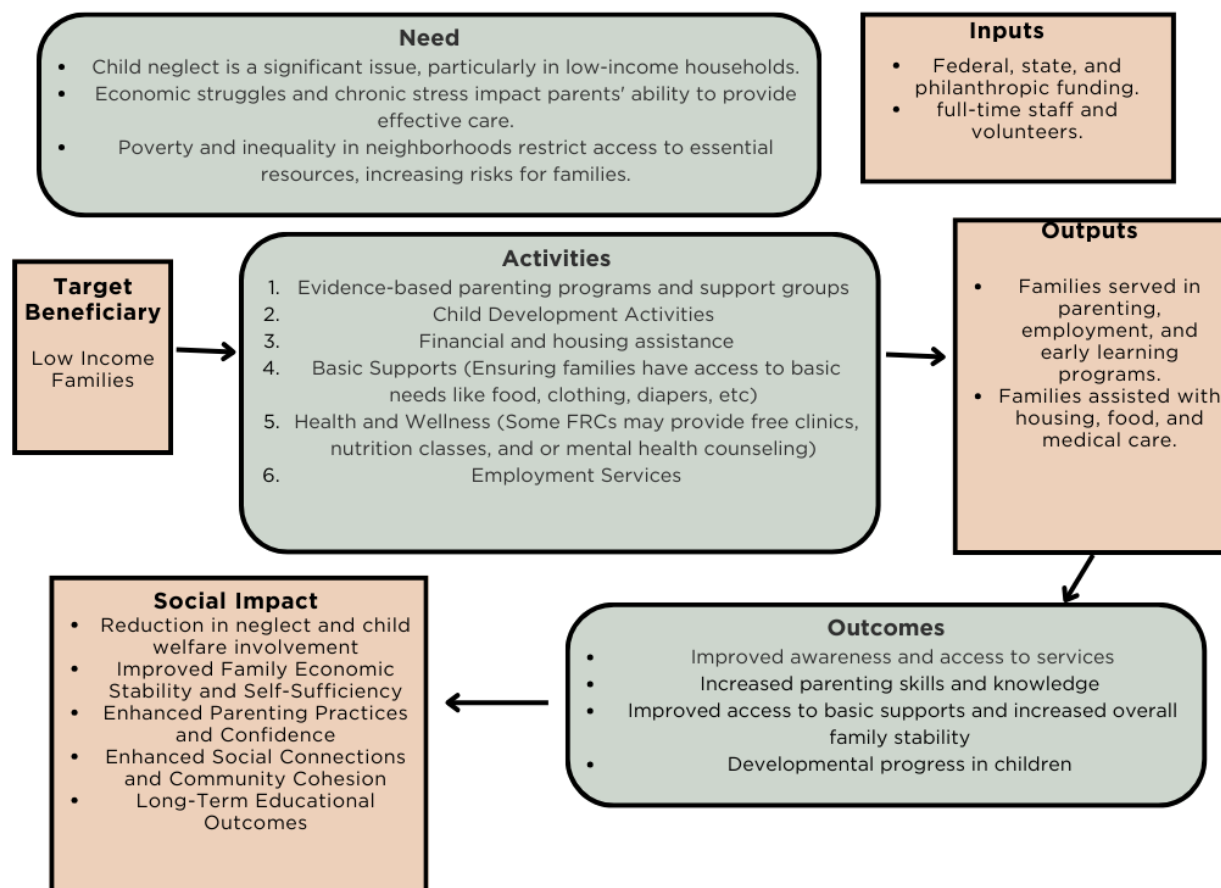
Families, particularly parents, might have a feeling of isolation in these situations. During our interview with Tameka Caldwell, the Director of Family Strengthening at the Texas Alliance of Child and Family Services (TACFS), Their methods include peer parenting groups, workshops, and fostering sustainable partnerships with schools and social services. Programs like the Parent Café Model & Fatherhood Programs contribute to strengthening families and fostering peer support networks (*Home 2025*). MHP Salud, a national non-profit organization, is committed to empowering underserved communities by enhancing access to health care and social services. They emphasize that the individuals visiting parent educators concentrate on child development and parent-child interaction to enhance children's cognitive and social development (MHP Salud, 2024). PAT not only helps address the physical and mental needs of the children but also of their parents. PAT focuses on involvement among their peers and their community.

FRC's PAT program caters to a large group of people, which has been helpful to their various needs. The research has shown that greater parental involvement boosts a child's perceived level of competence. There are theoretical pathways through which children's perceptions and expectations of their cognitive competence are influenced by others: (a) performance accomplishments/performance mastery, (b) vicarious reinforcement, (c) verbal persuasion, and (d) emotion regulation. The findings suggest that a child's cognitive competence correlates with improved academic performance. Additionally, examining perceived cognitive competence is key to understanding the link between parental involvement and a child's academic performance (*Topor, Keane, Shelton, & Calkins, 2010*). The Parents as Teachers Program has shown significant improvements in various areas. One way that the parents involved in Parents as Teachers Programs have increased parenting skills by improving knowledge, behavior, and attitudes towards parenting (*Pat impact*). Parents involved in the PAT

program are more likely to participate in school events, volunteer in classrooms, communicate with their children's teachers, and assist with homework. Additionally, over 75% of these parents reported regularly taking their children to the library (*Pat impact*). In addition, PAT programs increase child development as children in the Parents as Teachers program. Programs are school-ready and score higher on standardized measures of reading, math, and language at kindergarten entry and later grades. Which leads to better long-term educational outcomes (*Pat impact*). Parents as Teachers programs offer long-term benefits and cost savings. One way is that children in Parents as Teachers programs have a 22% decreased likelihood of child maltreatment substantiations compared to children not in Parents as Teachers, which does reduce child protective service involvement (*Pat impact*). Parents as teachers have cost-saving lifetime benefits of PAT programs exceeding costs by 244%, according to some studies (Ljaf, 2017). Ways to measure success in parenting interventions include. Standardized assessment tools are used to measure improvements in parenting knowledge, behavior, and attitudes. Conducting longitudinal studies to track the progress of children and families over a long period. Gathering qualitative feedback from parents and practitioners to understand the impact of the interventions (*Designing, implementing, evaluating, and scaling up parenting interventions*). The public opinion seems to agree that family resource centers are worth investing in, and PAT has been proven to be effective, and the data below will prove but we ask the question: What is the social impact of Family Resource Center's "Parents as Teachers" program?

Logic Model

The following is the logic model of Family Resource Centers that we developed after a careful review of the literature on relevant interventions.



(Figure 1: Logic Model)

Need: Child neglect is a pressing issue threatening the well-being and development of children across the United States. In 2022, an estimated 558,899 children were victims of abuse and neglect, equating to 8 out of every 1,000 children (National Children's Alliance, 2023). The data and theoretical frameworks show the urgent need for comprehensive interventions to address the multifaceted causes of child neglect. Addressing this requires interventions that go beyond surface-level solutions, focusing instead on alleviating financial pressures, improving access to essential services, and fostering social cohesion within communities. By implementing comprehensive support and strategies, we can help empower families to provide safer, more stable environments for their children.

Activities: Family Resource Centers implement a comprehensive range of programs designed to strengthen families, promote stability, and enhance overall well-being.

1. Evidence-based Parenting Programs and Support Groups: These evidence-based programs, such as Parents as Teachers, focus on strengthening the parent-child relationship, building parenting skills, and promoting emotional regulation and household

stability. Effective parenting interventions typically include key components such as nonviolent discipline strategies, proactive parenting, positive reinforcement, and parent self-management. Skill-building is central—parents are guided through hands-on practice rather than simply receiving information. Techniques taught include time-out, logical consequences, setting clear family rules, monitoring children’s behavior, and praising appropriate actions. Parents also learn emotional regulation, problem-solving, and healthy communication techniques to reduce stress and improve family functioning. FRCs offer these programs in group or one-on-one settings, often paired with support groups that provide emotional encouragement and peer connection (World Health Organization, 2022).

2. Child Development Activities: FRCs provide a range of programs aimed at nurturing children’s cognitive, emotional, and social development. This includes age-appropriate playgroups that promote interaction and language development, academic tutoring for school-aged children, and enrichment activities such as music, art, or STEM-focused workshops. These activities are designed to prepare children for school success and foster a love of learning while supporting parents in understanding developmental milestones.
3. Financial and Housing Assistance: FRC staff offer one-on-one assistance and case management to help families secure housing and improve financial stability. Services may include helping families apply for public benefits (e.g., SNAP, TANF), identifying affordable housing options, accessing emergency rental or utility assistance, budgeting support, and connecting families to community partners for financial coaching or credit repair services. The goal is to reduce housing instability and promote economic resilience.
4. Basic Supports: FRCs distribute essential household items directly or through referrals to alleviate material hardship. This includes access to food pantries, clothing closets, diaper banks, hygiene kits, and school supplies. Some centers may also host “community closet” days or coordinate mobile pantries to reach families in underserved areas. These supports ensure that immediate needs are met so families can focus on long-term goals.
5. Health and Wellness: Many FRCs partner with local clinics and health providers to deliver basic preventive care and promote wellness. This may include free health screenings (e.g., blood pressure, vision, immunizations), mental health services (counseling, support groups, or referrals), and nutrition education workshops. FRCs may also provide information on enrolling in Medicaid/CHIP or accessing community clinics, ensuring families stay healthy and informed.
6. Employment Services: FRCs provide a range of employment-related services designed to increase family income and job security. These include resume and cover letter assistance, job readiness workshops, digital literacy training, and soft-skills coaching. FRCs may host job fairs, offer referrals to local workforce development programs, or provide on-site training in partnership with community colleges or employers. Case

managers may also assist with job placement or transportation coordination to remove barriers to employment.

Outcomes: The outcomes of FRC programs reflect their commitment to addressing the needs of families and fostering tangible improvements in their lives and well-being. These outcomes highlight the effectiveness of their coordinated activities and services.

1. **Improved Awareness and Access:** Families gain better knowledge of available resources and navigate services more effectively, leading to increased utilization.
2. **Enhanced Parenting Skills:** Parents develop practical skills and confidence, fostering healthier relationships and creating supportive home environments for their children.
3. **Stability in Basic Needs:** Families achieve greater security in housing, employment, and access to essential resources, reducing daily stressors and improving family functioning.
4. **Child Development Improvement:** Early learning programs and family support services promote measurable social and cognitive development in children, preparing them for long-term success.

Social Impact: Through sustained engagement and support, FRCs contribute to transformative, long-term changes within families and communities. These impacts address ongoing issues and foster resilience.

1. **Reduction in Child Neglect:** FRCs reduce the incidence of child welfare involvement by addressing underlying causes such as poverty and stress.
2. **Economic Stability:** Families achieve greater financial independence and self-sufficiency through targeted support.
3. **Improved Parenting Confidence:** Strengthened parenting practices lead to healthier family dynamics and long-term emotional well-being.
4. **Stronger Social Connections:** Families and communities experience enhanced cohesion and mutual support.
5. **Educational Success:** Children and families benefit from improved academic performance, school engagement, and long-term educational outcomes.

Expert Interviews to Validate the Logic Model

While our logic model, grounded in an extensive literature review, provides a comprehensive framework outlining key activities and outcomes of FRCs, it was crucial to confirm that this theoretical structure aligns with real-world implementation and expert perspectives. To achieve this validation, our team conducted expert interviews with professionals and practitioners who have direct experience delivering, funding, or academically evaluating programs within Family Resource Centers. These interviews were designed to provide practical insights, highlight operational nuances, and verify the effectiveness of programs such as Parents as Teachers, thereby ensuring our logic model accurately reflects actual conditions and outcomes experienced by families and communities.

To efficiently collect data for our project, our team focused on conducting interviews with experts and leaders who worked at Family Resource Centers. A group of program staff from Family Resource Centers in the southwest regions stated that they were priorities for our client, Philanthropy Southwest. We started by identifying Family Resource Centers that were officially affiliated with the National Family Support Network and focusing on organizations that were providing early childhood services and basic needs support for families. After we collected contacts and information of these Family Resource Centers, we conducted a comprehensive outreach campaign through organized email outreach we contacted 108 program coordinators and Family Resource executives by giving them an introduction of our capstone project and inviting them to be part of project through a brief, semi-structured interview to talk about their insights on programs that were effective in Family Resource Centers.

Through this outreach campaign, we successfully conducted 12 interviews with experienced professionals from different states. The interviews were conducted in pairs from our capstone team to maintain high standards for interviewing and a consistent interview pattern. One student would be the primary interviewer, asking the interviewee pre-made questions (Appendix 1) and guiding the interview, and the second student would be focused on documentation of the interview, making sure that the interview was accurately being interpreted. Our group then analyzed the recordings from the interview, carefully reviewing each interview transcript to create an interview summary, which we reported to our capstone group. Our reports included time for the capstone team to see common themes, potential insights, and gather important examples we could utilize for our project. This method allowed our team to deeply understand how Family Resource Centers are effectively implementing programs like Parents as Teachers to address child neglect.

Conclusions from interviews

The qualitative interviews with Family Resource Center service providers, funders, and other relevant professionals offer significant insights that reinforce and validate the components of our logic model. These discussions provide practical evidence of the effectiveness of the strategies and interventions employed by FRCs as outlined in the logic model. The following is a summary breakdown of each of our interviews detailing how our discussion with each professional reinforces aspects of our logic model.

Staff member from SJRC Family Resource Center

- Needs: Discusses the organizational shift from traditional foster care to community-based programs that focus on family preservation and prevention, directly aligning with the needs identified in the logic model, such as addressing the root problems of child neglect and strengthening family stability.

- Activities: She details the array of services offered, including parenting programs, basic needs support, substance abuse counseling, and case management, aligning well with the activities listed in the logic model
- Outcomes: Mention measurable outcomes such as keeping children close to home and reducing the number of children entering foster care.
- Feedback and Suggestions: The feedback revolves around the holistic, non-punitive approach to family support, emphasizing the importance of community trust and engagement, a key aspect reflected in the logic model.

Faculty member at Texas A&M University who researches child wellness

- Need: Dr. Viriru discusses the need for voice-based participation and responsive services, which resonate with the community's needs, to be outlined in the logic model
- Activities: Her focus on tailored programs based on family and community voices aligns with the implementation strategies of FRCs aimed at customization and responsiveness- having a highly theoretical and psychological perspective not directly specific to FRCs, She also emphasizes how important it is for FRC employees to have a non judgemental tone and attitude to help families.
- Feedback and Suggestions: Dr. Viriru's feedback suggests that programs succeed when they listen to and act upon the needs of families, advising improvements in how services are delivered and customized

Staff members from Child & Family Resources, Inc.

- Needs: They discuss comprehensive family and community services, closely matching the needs highlighted in the logic model, such as addressing basic needs and enhancing community linkages
- Activities: The activities described, including referrals for healthcare, parenting programs, and basic and financial support, directly reflect those envisioned in the logic model.
- Outcomes: Outcomes such as increased maternal health and reduced isolation are discussed, as well as school readiness, and many of the other tracked outcomes in PAT
- Feedback: Feedback focuses on the effectiveness of referral systems and community partnerships, suggesting enhancements in these areas for better service delivery

Staff member from the El Paso Center for Children Family Resource Center

- Needs: discusses the importance of tracking program impact across multiple domains, aligning with the logic model's focus on addressing broad and specific needs within families and communities. She highlights the challenges in measuring impacts that resonate with the needs identified in the logic model, such as ensuring family stability and reducing child neglect.

- Activities: Highlighted programs like Group parenting classes such as Strengthening Families, Parent Cafes, and WhyTry Case Management services for families needing a very broad range of services (e.g., housing, WIC, healthcare, employment assistance) Presentations by community partners on things like health, wellness, nutrition, stress management, workforce readiness Basic needs support
- Outcomes: points out the difficulties in measuring long-term impacts, such as keeping families together and improving child welfare. However, she emphasizes the importance of interim metrics like session attendance and immediate post-session impacts, which are designed to indirectly lead to the long-term outcomes outlined in the logic model. Also highly emphasizes relying on the research that has evaluated the programs being delivered as confidence for the kind of outcomes to be expected.
- Feedback: Her feedback includes a critical look at the expectations placed on FRCs by funders, particularly regarding the burden of proof for long-term impacts. She suggests that funders should rely more on existing research rather than requiring FRCs to revalidate established interventions continually.

Staff member from The Texas Alliance of Child and Family Services

- Need: She highlights the importance of addressing multifaceted family needs through community-based support, which resonates with the logic model's focus on alleviating poverty, enhancing parenting skills, and reducing child neglect
- Activities: She describes specific activities such as parent leadership development, resource navigation, parenting support, and child development activities.
- Outcomes: points out that one of the key outcomes of FRCs includes strengthening families and building healthier communities, which are central to the anticipated outcomes in the logic model. She emphasizes the impact of these activities on reducing child neglect and enhancing community cohesion, reflecting the goals of the logic model.
- Feedback: Her discussion includes feedback on the effectiveness of the FRCs in meeting community needs, particularly their ability to adapt to the unique challenges of different family structures and community dynamics. This feedback supports the need for flexibility and responsiveness in the logic model to adapt to various community contexts.

Staff member from the George Foundation

- Needs: Touches on the critical needs of families that are addressed by FRCs, such as accessing various community resources and receiving comprehensive support under one roof. Her emphasis on understanding the specific crises that bring families to FRCs aligns with the logic model's approach to addressing urgent community needs, such as poverty and lack of access to essential services is important.
- Activities: She discusses the role of FRCs in offering integrated services that include educational programs, health services, and basic needs support. This matches the logic model's depiction of FRC activities designed to provide holistic support to families.

Shannan particularly highlights the importance of navigation services that guide families through various available resources, emphasizing the need for personalized support, which is a key component in the logic model.

- **Outcomes:** Discuss how successful outcomes include helping families achieve stability and independence, which reflects the logic model's anticipated outcomes. She elaborates on the importance of having support services that not only meet immediate needs but also empower families to maintain their stability long-term, echoing the model's focus on sustainable impact.
- **Feedback:** Shannan provides feedback on the necessity for FRCs to be seen as a trusted and comprehensive resource within communities. She suggests that FRCs should aim to reduce the burden on families by offering a one-stop solution where they can receive all required services without needing to retell their stories multiple times. This feedback aligns with the logic model's emphasis on efficient and empathetic service delivery.

Staff member from the Community Partnership Family Resource Center

- **Needs:** discusses the comprehensive services provided by FRCs that are designed to meet a wide array of family needs. This directly aligns with the logic model's focus on addressing key areas such as child development, family empowerment, and basic needs, ensuring families receive holistic support.
- **Activities:** elaborates on specific programs such as Parents as Teachers, and other family-oriented activities that align with those listed in the logic model. These activities focus on enhancing parenting skills, providing child development opportunities, and strengthening overall family dynamics, which are critical components of the logic model.
- **Outcomes:** She validated all of the outcomes that the research presents with PAT and emphasized that not all families are the same and have different needs
- **Feedback** suggests that they must continually adapt to the changing needs of the families they serve.

Staff member from The Hogle Foundation

- **Needs:** Describes the complexity and diversity of needs within child welfare, emphasizing the multifaceted nature of family support required, from prenatal care to post-removal scenarios. This aligns with the broad needs identified in the logic model but also suggests a need for more specificity in categorizing these needs.
- **Activities:** She highlights various organizations' broad range of activities, such as parenting programs and child development initiatives. Her foundation's focus is on child development and family stability, and she didn't feel like she had seen an organization effectively integrate all of our listed activities into one organization (especially the financial services and employment services).
- **Outcomes:** They look for the traditional baselines and growth in number served, as well as the organization's having 3-6 months of reserves. Also points out specific programs

like Parents as Teachers, noting their success in preventing child removal and enhancing family stability.

- Feedback: Kristy suggests that while the broad scope of services is necessary, there is a significant benefit in refining and focusing missions and activities to prevent being overwhelmed. She also suggested that providing an estimate of the return on investment for these programs would be highly beneficial. She pointed out that such an analysis could help funders see the value of investing in organizations that are performing adequately but have the potential to enhance their impact significantly. By showing the benefits of additional investments, funders could better understand how their support might elevate these organizations to fully realize a Family Resource Center-like model, thereby increasing their effectiveness in serving families.

Staff member from Bright Futures

- Need: Clea emphasizes the FRC's approach to addressing diverse family needs across various domains, from mental health to financial stability.
- Activities:
 - Basic Services: Minimal engagement, such as referrals or informational pamphlets.
 - Centre Services: Includes both emergency provisions (like diapers and food) and participatory activities (such as English and parenting classes).
 - Family Development Work: Involves in-depth engagement through family support specialists who conduct holistic assessments to craft personalized support plans.
- Outcomes: Clea discusses the positive outcomes of engaging families through the FRC's services, such as improved early childhood development and increased parental involvement and advocacy in their children's education and welfare. She also emphasized that every family is different and success can look a variety of different ways, especially since their center services such to a diverse set of needs.
- Feedback: Throughout the interview, Clea speaks to the importance of adapting services to meet the unique needs of each family, suggesting a continual need for flexibility and responsiveness in FRC operations.

Staff members from Help Me Grow North Texas

- Need: Families struggle to navigate healthcare, childcare, financial aid, and social services across 18 counties. The lack of a centralized resource hub results in confusion and gaps in access. Disparities in early childhood screening, developmental services, and parent education.
- Activities: Call Center Navigation: Directs families to appropriate services and tracks referrals. Family Resource Centers (FRCs): These centers offer in-person support,

parenting workshops, and essential items (e.g., diapers). Community Partnerships: Works with schools, healthcare providers, and funders to streamline support. Data-Driven Services: Uses screening results and referral trends to shape programming.

- Outcomes: Increased access to essential services, reducing stress for families. Improved child development through early screenings and referrals. Strengthened family resilience by providing financial and parenting support. Greater community collaboration, leading to sustainable support networks.

Staff member from Project Unity

- Activities: Comprehensive Service Provision:
 - Childcare and Education: Services include providing childcare and various forms of educational support, such as adult education programs and skill development workshops.
 - Basic Needs: Distribution of essential items like food, clothing, and hygiene products. They operate a food pantry and receive clothing donations to meet direct needs.
 - Health Assistance: Includes health services, which might have subcategories like medical care or specialized health interventions.
 - Employment and Financial Aid: Assistance with employment services and financial aid, such as help with rent, utilities, and employment-seeking efforts.
- Outcomes:
 - Service Documentation: Specific services provided are documented in case notes, including childcare, clothing, educational assistance, employment support, food provision, health assistance, and more. This documentation supports clear reporting on client engagements and services rendered.
 - Performance Indicators: Project Unity has integrated national performance indicators related to poverty reduction, allowing them to track client progress in areas like employment, income improvement, educational attainment, and parenting skills.
 - Family Support Services (FSS) Reporting: They report to FSS on numerous metrics, including the number of people served, types of services provided, and the effectiveness of those services. This includes tracking through the centralized access point, basic needs assistance, and engagement metrics like workshop attendance and parent advisory committee activities.
 - Protective Factor Survey: They conduct pre- and post-service surveys to assess improvements in client situations, focusing on preventing child abuse and enhancing family support, which are central goals of their FSS funding.
 - Client Outcomes: Apart from regulatory reporting, they monitor direct client outcomes such as obtaining jobs, educational progress, and improved family dynamics. These outcomes help assess the impact of their services on clients'

lives, aligning with broader organizational goals of poverty reduction and improved social welfare.

Our literature review found that improving child wellness requires addressing multiple, interrelated factors, such as food and housing security, access to health care, job stability, early childhood education, and strengthened economic support. These findings led us to prioritize intervention models that offer comprehensive, multi-dimensional support over single-issue solutions. The interviews reinforced our logic model, highlighting a strong alignment between the wraparound services provided by Family Resource Centers (FRCs) and the complex needs of families identified in our research.

We selected the holistic model of Family Resource Centers because they offer a portfolio of programs and services, which are designed to meet families where they are and provide a variety of services under one roof. As a professional in family well-being grantmaking who was very familiar with the FRC model, shared, “Until you resolve whatever the crisis is that got them into this situation in the first place, it doesn’t matter. You can give them all the child development and all the parenting support, but they’re just not going to get there because they’re not in the right headspace... What we want is a one-stop shop for families to have a trusted partner in a trusted place.” An FRC professional similarly expressed, “So if we just give them food and send them on their way, we’re not solving anything. We’re putting a Band-Aid on that. We’re gonna see them back next week and the week after... So it’s important to take them under our wing.”

Both of these interviewees and others reinforced the idea that families rarely face a single issue. Instead, they experience overlapping challenges that must be addressed collectively. As one interviewee noted, “Very rarely...do they just need this. No, they need this and this and this.”. These compounded needs require care models that can be both comprehensive and flexible, which FRCs are uniquely positioned to offer.

These and similar statements from other interviews reinforced what we found in our literature and what we have in our logic model, because professionals were sharing the importance of helping families address multiple interrelated needs. This is why our logic model’s activities span a range of services, and the following section will address the extent to which all of our interviewees’ FRCs provided each service.

Regarding our logic model’s activities, service providers are detailed on overall alignment with the activities listed on our model. No Family Resource Center (FRC) is identical, and not every center directly administers every service listed under our activities. Figure _ is a chart that shows the number of FRC service providers we talked to who either directly talked about having each of the activities listed on our logic model, or we know them to have it based on information on their website or impact reports. This demonstrates a broad consensus on the

essential services that FRCs strive to provide, highlighting both the adaptability and the core commitments that define the network of centers.

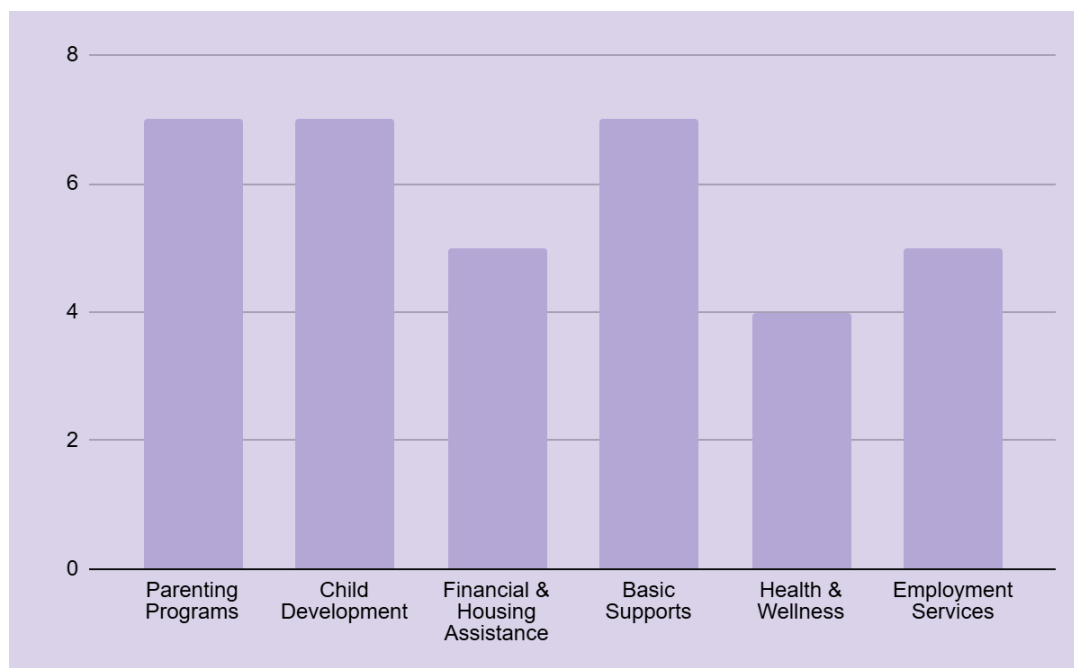


Figure 2: Frequency of Key FRC Program Activities Among Interviewed Family Resource Centers

1. Evidence-Based Parenting Programs and Support Groups: Family Resource Centers (FRCs) consistently offer structured, research-backed parenting programs, including widely adopted models like Parents as Teachers (PAT) and other specialized supports such as fatherhood initiatives. These programs not only equip parents with critical child-rearing skills but also foster community-building and emotional support. Tara Rousett emphasized her organization's parenting programs, saying, "We have breastfeeding classes, fatherhood classes. We have just general parenting classes... One of the evidence-based models that we use is called PAT or Parents as Teachers. And our Parents as Teachers program, we go into the home... It teaches the parent the skills that they need to be a successful parent." **All 7 of the FRCs** that we talked to had parenting programs, and all their programming includes PAT (see figure 2).
2. Child Development Activities: In our logic model, child development activities refer to services that directly promote a child's cognitive, social, emotional, or physical development. These include not only structured programs like playgroups, community enrichment events, or early screening activities but also parent-child interactions facilitated by home visitors using developmentally appropriate tools and activities. These services differ from parenting programs, which focus on teaching parents new skills and strategies for raising children. However, some models, like Parents as Teachers (PAT), blend both, equipping parents with knowledge while simultaneously supporting

children's growth. PAT, for example, includes parent education on developmental milestones *and* activities that directly engage children during home visits or group sessions. Tameka Caldwell of the Texas Family Support Network explained how these activities create opportunities for early learning and parent-child bonding: "They have what's called Group Connections... designed to allow parents to have socialization with other parents, but also their children to do the same and then have activities and educational components that help promote the development, growth, and development of their child." So, while parenting programs focus on educating and empowering adults, child development activities emphasize the child's growth, sometimes delivered in tandem. Our logic model includes both because FRCs often use blended strategies to support both parents and children, simultaneously building strong family foundations and healthy early childhood outcomes, and **all 7 of the FRCs** we interviewed had these services (see figure 2).

3. Financial and Housing Assistance: FRCs also play a critical role in reducing family stress by addressing urgent financial needs such as housing instability, utility bills, and basic cash assistance. While not every center has consistent funding to offer direct support (**5 out of 7** offered some form of financial assistance), multiple professionals emphasized that when financial assistance is available, either internally or through partnerships, it can be transformative for families on the edge of crisis. Cory Gorton from... explained, "We don't always have financial assistance funds, but when we do, it makes a world of difference. If we can help a family with rent or utilities at that moment, it relieves a massive burden and opens the door for them to engage in other services they wouldn't have had the capacity for otherwise." Clea Willow at... expressed a similar response, emphasizing both the value and scarcity of these funds. "We try to help with things like rent or utilities when we have the resources. It's not something we can always do, but when we can, it helps stabilize a family enough that they can start thinking long term instead of just surviving day to day."
4. Basic Supports: In our logic model, basic supports refer to the immediate, tangible items and services that meet families' daily survival needs. These include food and hygiene items, diapers, clothing, transportation, and household necessities. Basic support is often delivered through in-house pantries, closets, or partnerships with local organizations. These services are distinct from financial and housing assistance, which generally involve monetary support (e.g., rent or utility payments), and from health and wellness services, which focus on physical or mental care. Basic support is often the first touchpoint for families in crisis, offering immediate relief while helping build trust and engagement. Every FRC we spoke with (**7 out of 7**, see figure 2) offers some form of basic support, typically delivered without eligibility requirements or long-term commitment. Wendy Puga from... emphasized their referral services to basic support. "Sometimes they [child care resource and referral staff] can connect [families] to the right department for the WIC or SNAP or any of those benefits access. So it's a great referral service for

families.” These insights validate our logic model’s inclusion of basic supports as a foundational element of FRC programming. They also emphasize that addressing tangible needs is not separate from long-term outcomes, it’s often the first step in building trust, stability, and sustained engagement with families.

5. Health and Wellness: While not all FRCs have the capacity to offer health services directly (only **4 out of 7**, see figure 2), some have found creative and community-driven ways to promote health and wellness. Services range from free clinics and immunizations to mental health counseling and breastfeeding support, broadly reinforcing family well-being and reducing barriers to care. Tara Roussett described how her Family Resource Center partners with healthcare institutions to embed accessible services directly on-site. “We have a partnership with UT School of Nursing out of San Antonio, where they have an on-site clinic... If they have a child under the age of 18, they can get their immunizations and catch up with a practitioner. We have telehealth that goes into the main hospital in San Antonio.”.
6. Employment Services: In our logic model, employment services refer to programs or supports that help parents and caregivers access, retain, or advance in work. These services may include assistance with job applications, resume building, interview preparation, and referrals to workforce programs or vocational training. In addition, many FRCs provide indirect employment support, such as helping families secure child care or transportation, which are critical enablers of sustained employment. While not all Family Resource Centers offer dedicated employment programming (**5 out of 7** see figure 2), multiple professionals we interviewed recognized the importance of supporting economic mobility. FRCs often integrate employment assistance into broader case management or navigation services, meeting families where they are and tailoring support to their goals. Wendy Puga explained how child care is often the linchpin of employment success for families, and how their agency connects families to that support: “That’s a big component for families to be able to go to work, they have to have reliable child care... and connecting them to resources that will help them keep their jobs and be able to provide for their families.” Tara Roussett highlighted how basic infrastructure, such as technology access, can play a vital role: *“We have a computer so families can search for jobs while kids are playing and activities are going on.”*

Social Return on Investment (SROI) Approach

While our logic model outlines a broad set of expected outcomes for Family Resource Centers (FRCs), including improved parenting skills, increased service awareness, and stronger community connections, not all of these outcomes were feasible to quantify within the scope of our Social Return on Investment (SROI) analysis. To ensure rigor and data availability, we selected three key outcomes for Parents as Teachers (PAT), improved school readiness, reduced child abuse and neglect, and increased parental financial stability, based on the strength of existing research, the availability of reliable financial proxies, and their alignment with the

priorities emphasized in expert interviews. These outcomes allowed us to develop a conservative yet meaningful estimate of the economic and social value PAT delivers when implemented through FRCs.

1. Input Variables:

All input variables are based on the PAT budget toolkit, assuming that a PAT program is trying to serve 100 families in Texas, which is where the average salaries are based, therefore, we would need to calculate outcomes based on an organization hypothetically serving 100 families in Texas.

1.1. Personnel Costs

- Parent Educators (4 FTE): \$42,400/year per educator x 4 = \$169,600
- Supervisor (1 FTE): \$64,534/year
- Support Staff (Administrative, 0.5 FTE): \$20,000/year
- Benefits (25% of salaries): \$63,533.50

Total Personnel Costs: \$169,600 + \$64,534 + \$20,000 + \$63,533.50 = \$317,667.50

Personnel Costs are the largest investment in the PAT project, reflecting the project's high reliance on professional manpower and emphasis on service quality. In our estimate, the staffing includes four full-time Parent Educators (each with an annual salary of \$42,400), one full-time Supervisor (annual salary of \$64,534), and one part-time administrative support staff (0.5 FTE, annual salary of \$20,000), plus employee benefits calculated at 25% of the salary, totaling \$317,667.50. This estimate is based on the standard configuration recommendations in the PAT-Budget-Toolkit, combined with the salary level in Texas, and reference to the job salary data provided by the Indeed website. The salary of Parent Educators reflects their multiple responsibilities in home visit services, such as direct education, parent guidance, and data entry, while taking into account their professional background and ongoing training requirements. The salary of the Supervisor corresponds to his comprehensive role in project management, model supervision, team support, and data quality control; although the administrative staff is part-time, they play a key role in data entry, material preparation, and daily coordination. The 25% benefit ratio covers regular employee benefit expenses such as medical insurance, vacations, and social security, reflecting the organization's support for the overall well-being and retention of employees. These data were selected as financial proxies because they are derived from actual project expenditure records and verified by the PAT official budget guide and local salary surveys in Texas. They have a good, realistic basis and are representative, so they can reasonably reflect the PAT project's investment costs in human resources.

1.2. Programmatic Costs

- Consumable Materials and Incentives: \$50 / family x 100 families = \$5,000
- Group Connections (monthly, including supplies, meals, incentives):
- \$200 / month x 12 = \$2,400.

Total Programmatic Costs: \$5,000 + \$2,400 = \$7,400

Programmatic Costs mainly include two parts: one is the materials and incentives provided to each family, and the other is the Group Connections activities organized by the project every month. We estimated the total cost to be \$7,400, of which each family invests an average of \$50 per year in consumable materials and small gifts for 100 families, totaling \$5,000. The monthly Group Connections activities are calculated at \$200 each time, totaling \$2,400 for the whole year. For the Consumable Materials and Incentives section, we refer to the average price of local retail and early childhood education material procurement platforms in Texas (such as Lakeshore Learning, Walmart educational supplies area, etc.). Each family will receive 3-4 family reading or parent-child activity packages each year, which usually include books, educational toys, and parent-child interaction guides, aiming to increase family participation and sustainability. The Group Connections activity is a service component explicitly required in the PAT model. The PAT Budget Toolkit states that the project needs to hold group activities at least once a month. We set the frequency of activities accordingly and made reasonable budgets for material preparation, simple meals and beverages, children's game items, parent incentives, and promotional items following the common practices of early childhood education institutions in Texas. In the absence of specific standard expenditure data, we estimated the costs based on the public budget of local early intervention projects in Texas, the guidance requirements of the PAT toolkit, and the frequency of distribution of family materials and activity needs mentioned in the interviews. Together, this information forms the basis of the financial proxy, allowing us to quantify the project's expenditures on family support and community activities within a reasonable range, thereby more accurately reflecting the project's actual investment in promoting family participation and community connections.

1.3. Professional Development & Staff Meetings

- Annual PAT Conference (4 staff): \$1,000 / person x 4 = \$4,000
- Additional Professional Development: \$200/staff/year x 5.5 staff = \$1,100

Total Professional Development Costs: \$4,000 + \$1,100 = \$5,100

Professional Development & Staff Meetings are an important investment of the PAT project in personnel support and capacity building, mainly including staff participation in the annual PAT conference and other forms of continuous professional development activities. According to the project settings, it is expected that four staff members will attend the PAT official meeting each year, with an estimated cost of \$1,000 per person, totaling \$4,000. At the same time, \$200 per person is reserved for further training for all 5.5 employees, totaling \$1,100. Therefore, the total cost of this item is \$5,100. Although this part of the investment is often not

listed separately in the project's daily budget, since the PAT model itself stipulates that home visitors must complete certification training every year, and it is strongly recommended that the project support staff to participate in the annual conference and external courses organized by the PAT official organization, we have constructed a financial proxy based on policy requirements and market reality without specific financial records. Regarding the annual meeting expenses, we refer to the registration price of the PAT official website conference in previous years, the travel and accommodation budget, and the staff training arrangements and expenditure range published in the Texas Family Service Project. At the same time, PAT also recommends that projects provide online courses, certification workshops, and external learning resources related to child development. Therefore, we selected the public pricing of these representative training platforms in Texas as a market reference for the "continuing education" part. In the case that the project cannot provide detailed internal training costs, we use the combined cost of "annual meeting participation + continuous training" as the average investment valuation per employee, and multiply it by the number of participants for estimation. Although this financial proxy is an indirect estimate, it is realistic and comparable to the general price level of training platforms and service agencies in Texas. We also combined the relevant suggestions in the PAT-Budget-Toolkit and the feedback from managers on the frequency of training and team meeting arrangements during the interview to further enhance the rationality and actual correspondence of the estimate.

1.4. Office Supplies and Communication

- General Office Supplies: \$1,500
- Phone and Internet: \$200/month x 12 months = \$2,400

Total Office Supplies & Communication Costs: \$1,500 + \$2,400 = \$3,900

Office Supplies and Communication are the basic investments to ensure the smooth daily operation, efficient communication, and material preparation of the PAT project. The total expenditure of this item is estimated to be \$3,900, of which the office supplies part is set at \$1,500, mainly covering basic office resources such as paper, stationery, folders, printing materials, and education packages required for daily use. The communication part includes telephone and Internet charges, calculated at \$200 per month, totaling \$2,400 for the whole year. Although the specific amount of these resources is not given in the PAT Budget Toolkit, the guide emphasizes that the project needs to provide sufficient educational and administrative support materials for home visitors. Therefore, we refer to the conventional budgeting methods of other non-profit early childhood education projects in Texas and use market levels as financial agents. In the absence of internal financial details, we combined market data and public budgets of similar organizations to construct a cost estimation model for this part to reflect the basic operating support expenses required for the project to maintain service delivery.

1.5. Screening Costs

Contracted Screening Services (Annual developmental, vision, and hearing screenings): $\$20 / \text{child} \times 100 = \$2,000$

Screening Costs is a necessary expense in the PAT program to ensure that each child receives an annual development screening, and is also an important guarantee that the program meets the core service requirements. According to estimates, we will use Contracted Screening Services. At a rate of \$20 per child per year, providing annual development, vision, and hearing screenings for 100 children costs a total of \$2,000. Although the PAT Budget Toolkit stipulates that the program must provide comprehensive screening, including language, cognitive, social-emotional, and motor development, it does not specify how to estimate the screening costs, nor does it require internal or external completion. Therefore, in the absence of specific financial records, we refer to the practice of family service projects in the Texas area and build a financial proxy based on outsourced services.

1.6. Transportation

**Mileage Reimbursement (Urban/Suburban):
 $\$150 / \text{family} / \text{year} \times 100 \text{ families} = \$15,000$**

Transportation is one of the important basic inputs to ensure the high-quality implementation of the PAT project. In particular, in the service model of on-site home visits based on families, transportation costs directly affect the stability and coverage of services. This analysis uses a standard urban/suburban commuting scenario to estimate that, based on a transportation subsidy of \$150 per household per year, a total of 100 families are served, with a total transportation cost of \$15,000 per year. Project staff use private cars to perform home visits, and the project party pays the corresponding expenses in the form of mileage reimbursement to ensure that the travel of educators does not cause a personal burden. Since the PAT Budget Toolkit does not provide specific transportation expenditure standards, we refer to the transportation reimbursement policy commonly used by non-profit organizations and education projects in Texas to establish a financial proxy. The reimbursement standard usually covers actual costs such as gasoline, vehicle wear and tear, insurance, and daily maintenance. In the absence of specific project itinerary data, we combined the home visit frequency, service coverage, and typical commuting distance mentioned in the interview, and referred to the public budget data of home visit projects in Texas to reasonably estimate the average travel cost.

1.7. Renewals and Affiliation Fees

- Annual Affiliate Fee: \$2,000
- Curriculum Subscription: \$220 / educator x 4 educators = \$880

Total Renewal & Affiliation Costs: \$2,000 + \$880 = \$2,880

Renewals and Affiliation Fees are important fixed investments for PAT projects to maintain model certification, continue to obtain core resources, and ensure project quality. According to the PAT Budget Toolkit, all projects are required to pay an Affiliate Fee of \$2,000 per year to ensure that the project continues to obtain course access, data system support, professional training resources, and project implementation guidance from the PAT national headquarters. This fee is a uniform standard and applies to all project sizes, so it can be directly included in the budget as a fixed cost. In addition, the PAT project is required to subscribe to annual course content for each Parent Educator to maintain their eligibility. Based on the course structure in the Toolkit and data from multiple actual local projects in Texas, we use a standard of \$220 per home visitor, a total of 4 educators, and a total of \$880. After adding up the two items, the cost related to Renewals and Affiliation is \$2,880.

1.8. Indirect Costs and Overhead

Indirect Costs and Overhead (10% of total): \$35,394.8

Indirect Costs and Overhead are estimated at 10% of the total project cost, totaling \$35,215. This part of the cost is used to cover the necessary expenses in the operation of the project that cannot be directly allocated to specific services, such as administrative support, personnel management, financial processing, office space, utilities, etc.

Total annual cost = **\$317,667.50 + \$7,400 + \$5,100 + \$3,900 + \$2,000 + \$15,000 + \$2,880 + \$35,394.8 = \$389,342.30**

2. Outcomes Variables:

2.1. *Improved School Readiness*

We use data from the literature “A Benefit Cost Analysis of the Abecedarian Early Childhood Intervention” as several financial proxies for the “Improved School Readiness” of the PAT program. The reason for the selection is that the two programs are very similar in terms of service objects and goals. The Abecedarian program provides early education, health, and nutrition services for high-risk children from birth to 5 years old, focusing on improving children's language skills, cognitive development, and academic readiness (Masse & Barnett, 2001). These are consistent with the PAT program's goal of improving children's school

readiness through home visits. The results of the Abecedarian program show that participating children have higher IQs, better academic performance, and a lower rate of entering special education (Masse & Barnett, 2001). These practical effects can bring economic savings to the education system, such as reducing the costs of special education and grade repetition. Because we currently lack long-term follow-up data, and Abecedarian already has complete follow-up results, with high data quality and rigorous calculation methods, we use it as a financial proxy.

2.1.1. Number of families served

Established Program Serving 100 Families in Texas.

2.1.2. Average number of children per household

To estimate the total number of children served, we refer to the 2023 American Community Survey data from the U.S. Census Bureau. Table B09001 shows that the total number of children under the age of 18 in Texas is 7,527,906, and Table DP02 shows that the number of households with one or more people under the age of 18 is 3,785,792. The average number of children per household is estimated to be $7,527,906 \div 3,785,792 = 1.99$. For ease of estimation, we use 2 as a reasonable and conservative assumption in our analysis. Therefore, the total number of children benefiting is:

$$\text{Total number of children benefiting} = 100 \text{ households} \times 2 \text{ children} = 200 \text{ children}$$

2.1.3. Attribution

In this calculation, we use the difference in special education placement rates between the intervention and control groups in the Abecedarian program to measure the true impact of the program. The researchers used a randomized controlled trial design to randomly assign high-risk children to an intervention or control group and track them until they were 21 years old. The data showed that in the control group that did not receive the intervention, 49% of the children were eventually placed in special education. In the experimental group that received the intervention, this proportion dropped to 31%. The difference of 18% between the two groups is what we believe can be attributed to the improvement brought by the program itself (Masse & Barnett, 2001).

$$\text{Net improvement} = 49\% - 31\% = 18\%$$

The difference of 18% has excluded the factor of natural improvement. In other words, the control group itself reflects that if there is no program intervention, some children will still not enter special education due to natural growth, family factors, or other background conditions. Because of this, this difference itself is the net impact under the condition of deadweight. The literature also clearly pointed out that the analysis of this project is based on the economic benefit measurement based on the real cost difference of the education system, and the estimation logic of the intervention effect is always based on the comparison between the

experimental group and the control group (Masse & Barnett, 2001). Therefore, under this RCT research framework, we decided not to estimate the deadweight separately, and also avoided the risk of double deduction.

2.1.4. Monetized Outcome Value

In this part of the calculation, we use the difference in the average annual cost of special education and regular education as a proxy for the economic benefits of the project. According to data provided by the Texas Education Agency, the average annual cost for each general education student in traditional school districts (districts only) is **\$13,537**. It reflects the average annual investment of the education system when students attend regular classes without receiving any special education services, and can be used as a basic reference for us to measure the cost of general education. To evaluate the annual expenditure of special education students, we refer to the funding model provided by the Texas Education Agency. According to the model, the funding formula for special education is: $\text{SPED Funding} = \text{Adjusted Allotment (AA)} \times \text{Instructional Arrangement Weight} \times \text{FTE}$. If a student receives "Resource Room" services all day, according to the average adjusted funding in Texas ($\text{AA} = \$7,696$) and the corresponding weight of this category ($\text{Weight} = 3.0$), $\text{FTE} = 1.0$ (the student receives SPED services all day) is substituted into the formula to obtain **SPED Cost = $\$7,696 \times 3.0 \times 1.0 = \$23,088$** . That is, the cost to the education system is about \$23,088 per student per year. We use a weight of 3.0 because this arrangement represents a common type of medium-intensity special education service with moderate resource allocation in Texas public schools. The weight of 3.0 is in a reasonable range, reflecting the actual cost of the service while avoiding exaggerating the effectiveness of the program. It is highly representative and conservative. More importantly, the characteristics of this service group are highly consistent with those of children in the PAT program who may avoid entering the special education system through early intervention. Therefore, using this weight for estimation is both in line with reality and convenient for presenting the possible financial savings of the program.

$$\text{Monetized Outcome Value} = \$23,088 - \$13,537 = \$9,551$$

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Improved School Readiness Benefit} &= \text{Total number of children benefiting} \times \text{Attribution} \times \\ \text{Monetized Outcome Value} &= 200 \times 18\% \times \$9,551 = \$343,836 \end{aligned}$$

2.2. Reducing child abuse and neglect

We will use the data from the paper "Parents as Teachers Family Outcomes: New Insights from the Mother and Infant Home Visiting Program Evaluation" to calculate the outcomes "Reducing child abuse and neglect" in the PAT project. MIHOPE is a large

randomized controlled trial supported by the US federal government, covering four major evidence-based home visiting programs, one of which is Parents as Teachers. We chose this report because its data not only comes from the real service population of the PAT program, but also has a rigorous research design, using propensity score matching (PSM) and multivariate regression model control variables, so that it can reflect the "net effect" of the PAT program (McCombs-Thornton et al., 2023). More importantly, the study focuses on serving high-risk children aged 0–3 and their families, and its goals are consistent with this project, both of which are committed to reducing the occurrence of abuse and neglect (McCombs-Thornton et al., 2023). Therefore, the data in this paper are very suitable as key parameters in our SROI analysis.

2.2.1. Number of families served

Established Program Serving 100 Families in Texas.

2.2.2. Average number of children per household

To estimate the total number of children served, we refer to the 2023 American Community Survey data from the U.S. Census Bureau. Table B09001 shows that the total number of children under the age of 18 in Texas is 7,527,906, and Table DP02 shows that the number of households with one or more people under the age of 18 is 3,785,792. The average number of children per household is estimated to be $7,527,906 \div 3,785,792 = 1.99$. For ease of estimation, we use 2 as a reasonable and conservative assumption in our analysis. Therefore, the total number of children benefiting is:

$$\text{Total number of children benefiting} = 100 \text{ households} \times 2 \text{ children} = 200 \text{ children}$$

2.2.3. Attribution

In this calculation, we directly use the main results in the MIHOPE reanalysis report: from the study enrollment to the 15-month follow-up, the reported incidence of any abuse or neglect in the treatment group "receiving PAT home visits" was 5.6%, while the control group that did not receive home visits was 12.4% (McCombs-Thornton et al., 2023). The difference between the two groups is:

$$\text{Net improvement} = 12.4\% - 5.6\% = 6.8\%$$

We directly use this 6.8% as the attribution effect in SROI because this value has been strictly matched and statistically controlled to eliminate the interference of more than 40 variables such as family background, economic status, and mother's health status, thus reflecting the "extra changes" brought about by the PAT project itself (McCombs-Thornton et al., 2023).

2.2.4. Monetized Outcome Value

In this part of the calculation, we used the total budget and service population data under the Texas Child Protection Services (DFPS) 2024 "Protect Children" strategic goal to estimate the average government system response cost for each child who suffers from abuse. According to the DFPS FY2024 Operating Budget data, the total budget for the "Protect Children" strategy is \$2,040,021,248; and according to the DFPS Data Book website information, the number of children receiving Family Preservation services in 2024 is 61,062. Thus, we can get:

$$\text{Monetized Outcome Value} = \$2,040,021,248 \div 61,062 = \$33,409$$

This value can be used as the system response cost (including personnel, service, judicial, foster care, and subsequent intervention expenses) caused by each case of child abuse or neglect, and is the main financial proxy used in our analysis to evaluate the economic benefits created by the program to prevent abuse.

$$\text{Reducing Child Abuse and Neglect Benefit} = \text{Total number of children benefiting} \times \text{Attribution} \times \text{Monetized Outcome Value} = 200 \times 6.8\% \times \$33,409 = \$454,362$$

3. *Increasing Parents' Financial Stability*

To estimate the financial proxy of improved parent financial stability after families used PAT, we drew information from Wondemu, Joranger, and Brekke, named "Impact of child disability on parental employment and labor income". This study has data about the negative economic impact on parents, especially mothers, of children who need remedial classes or have learning disabilities. Mothers have the most negative economic impact and have a significantly lower labor force participation, leading to lower long-term earnings. For our Social Return on Investment Model, we utilized these employment outcomes to create estimates for calculating how PAT could increase families' income. The financial proxy was done by calculating the potential earnings mothers would have by entering the workforce either part-time or full-time.

3.1.1. Potential Indicators:

- Changes in parent employment rates before and after participation in the PAT program.
- Increase in overall family income.

3.1.2. Key Assumptions:

- There is a positive association between the PAT program and improved parental employment and income growth, which is not the only influence but is attributable.
- Data on family income gains are available indirectly through existing research.

3.1.3. Number of families served

Established Program Serving 100 Families in Texas.

3.1.4. Attribution

Proportion of participants newly employed due to PAT

For the Parent Employment and Income outcome, we will look at historical trends in employment rates and income changes for non-participating families. Implying that this portion of the outcome might have and would have occurred naturally, and that there would have been an increase in employment of 16% for families who participated in PAT programs for one year, compared to those who did not.

3.2 Monetized Outcome Value (Estimated annual income increase per employed participant part-time)

To estimate the annual income increase for Parents as Teachers (PAT) participants who gain employment as a result of the program, we used Texas state labor data to establish a realistic financial proxy. According to the Texas Workforce Commission, the average weekly wage in Texas is \$1,396, which translates to an estimated \$72,592 in annual income for a full-time, year-round worker. This figure was used as a baseline to represent the potential income gain for a PAT participant transitioning from unemployment to full-time employment. To create more conservative estimates—reflecting part-time or entry-level employment, which is common among newly employed caregivers—we adjusted this figure accordingly. For part-time employment, we used 50% of the full-time wage, resulting in an estimated annual income of \$36,296.

Statistical Method:

We will use the amount of annual household income growth as the basis for estimating economic value.

Formula:

PAT Increasing Parents' Financial Stability = Number of PAT participants (households) × Proportion of participants newly employed due to PAT × Estimated annual income increase per employed participant Part-time

\$580,736 (**PAT Increasing Parents Financial Stability**) = 100 (households) × .16 (increase in employment) × \$36,296 (average Texas wage for part-time work)

Results

Based on the results of this analysis, the Social Return on Investment (SROI) of the PAT program is:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{SROI} &= \frac{\text{Total Social Value}}{\text{Total Annual Program Cost}} \\ &= \frac{(\$343,836 + \$454,362 + \$580,736)}{\$389,342.30} \\ &\approx 3.54 \end{aligned}$$

This means that for every \$1 invested, the PAT program can create approximately \$3.56 in social value for society. This return rate combines the economic benefits of three core outcomes, including reduced child abuse and neglect, improved children's academic readiness, and improved family employment and income. Each benefit is estimated using evidence-based attribution ratios and financial proxies to ensure the rationality and conservatism of the evaluation. The final results reflect the significant social value of the PAT program in promoting child safety, educational outcomes, and family economic stability.

Limitations

It is important to acknowledge several limitations of this Social Return on Investment analysis. Firstly, this analysis does not capture all potential outcomes of the Parents as Teachers program due to limited available data and the inherent difficulty in quantifying certain benefits. An interview conducted with leaders at the Parents as Teachers National Center identified additional outcomes such as enhanced positive parenting practices, improved school attendance, and better classroom behavior. These valuable outcomes, however, were not included because they are difficult to monetize or quantify reliably with existing data.

Another limitation pertains to the scope of the data used. Our SROI calculations are based on an average number of families served (specifically 100 families, or 200 children). The actual number of families served by PAT programs varies significantly across different locations, which means the costs and benefits realized could differ considerably when scaled to reflect larger or smaller service populations.

Additionally, the outcomes used in our analysis rely heavily on financial proxies derived from secondary sources and existing research. Although carefully selected for relevance and methodological rigor, these proxies may not fully capture the precise economic value of the outcomes specific to PAT. Future research using primary data collection and longitudinal studies could help provide more precise measures of these outcomes.

Furthermore, the SROI calculator assumes consistency and standardization of program implementation and outcomes across different PAT sites, which might not be the case in practice. Variability in implementation, local contexts, and population demographics could significantly affect the actual outcomes and social value generated by the program.

Lastly, it is important to recognize that PAT is only one of many programs often implemented by FRCs. FRCs typically provide a comprehensive array of services and programs, simultaneously addressing multiple interrelated family needs. This SROI analysis focuses on PAT and thus may not fully reflect the broader social impact generated by the diverse range of programs provided by FRCs.

Conclusions

This SROI analysis of the PAT program demonstrates strong social benefits, generating an estimated return of approximately \$3.54 in social value for every \$1 invested. Specifically, this research highlights PAT's notable outcomes in reducing child neglect, enhancing children's school readiness, and improving parental economic stability. These findings confirm that targeted, preventative interventions delivered through FRCs can yield measurable impacts on family well-being.

Given these insights, we offer several recommendations for stakeholders, including program practitioners, philanthropic funders, policymakers, and researchers, on how to leverage best this analysis for strategic decision making and program improvement.

Recommendations for Practitioners and Funders:

Prioritize and Sustain Investments: The demonstrated positive return suggests that philanthropic organizations and public agencies should prioritize and maintain investments in PAT offered by FRCs. Such investments are particularly crucial in communities experiencing high rates of child neglect or school readiness deficits.

Strategic Communication and Advocacy: FRCs should use these documented outcomes to enhance their communications and advocacy strategies. Clearly articulating measurable impacts, such as the reductions in child neglect cases and improved educational

outcomes, can attract increased support from policymakers, funders, and community stakeholders.

Recommendations for Future Research

Conduct Longitudinal Studies: We recommend funding and conducting rigorous, long-term studies to track participants beyond their immediate involvement in PAT. Such studies could significantly strengthen the evidence base by capturing long-term benefits like sustained educational achievement, lasting family economic stability, and decreased dependence on social services. This research has highlighted the importance of long-term research to better track and understand the full range of benefits provided by PAT and other FRC programs, ultimately enabling more precise and comprehensive evaluations of their social impact.

Ultimately, this analysis shows the role that comprehensive, family-centered interventions play in strengthening families and communities. The proven benefits of PAT reinforce the importance of preventative approaches that address the interconnected challenges faced by families. Policymakers, philanthropic entities, and practitioners should view these findings as evidence supporting investments in programs like this, recognizing the advantages they offer.

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Appendix

Appendix 1:

Interview Questions

1. **Program Effectiveness** –Are you able to measure outcomes? If you are, what tools do you use to measure these programs' outcomes? If not, what are the barriers to being able to measure the outcomes of programming successfully?
2. **Evaluating Impact & Outcomes** –What outcomes do you expect your program to achieve for the families it serves, and what lasting benefits do you anticipate?
3. **Social Return on Investment (SROI)** – How can Family Resource Centers measure and communicate their social return on investment, particularly in terms of cost savings related to child protective services, healthcare, and long-term economic stability?
4. **Strengthening Fundability** – Looking at our logic model, do you see any areas that could be improved or clarified to make the program more appealing and fundable from a grantmaker's perspective?
5. **Systemic Change & Long-Term Impact** – Can you provide examples of Family Resource Center programs that have successfully demonstrated measurable improvements in family economic stability and reductions in child neglect?