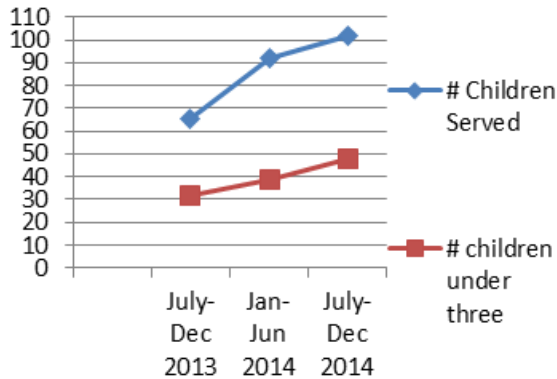


EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: STRENGTHENING FAMILIES DEMONSTRATION PROJECT
at Parent Child Centers in Rutland, Franklin/Grand Isle, and Washington
in partnership with DCF Family Services

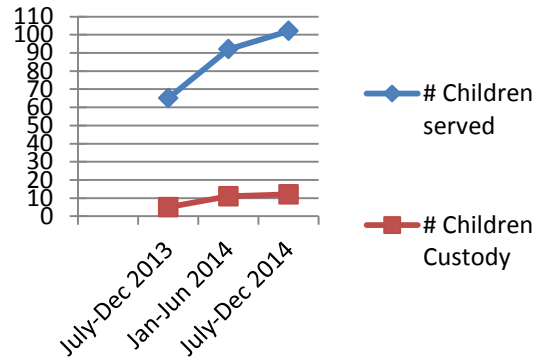
OUTCOME: Vermont's families are safe, nurturing, stable, and supported.

INDICATOR: Number and rate of reports and substantiations of child maltreatment.

Program Performance Measures:
How much did we do?
Strengthening Families Enrollment



Program Performance Measures:
Is anyone better off?
Number of open cases that entered State Custody



Story Behind the Baseline Performance:

Strengthening Families is a program designed to assist families who have an open DCF case to decrease risk factors and prevent children from entering state custody. Historically - *without Strengthening Families* - 30% of children with open family support cases come into state custody. **In the first 18 months, the Strengthening Families Sites experienced 7% -12% of children with open cases coming into custody, a substantial increase for the safety of children.**

The Family Support Specialist assists families through the Protective Factors framework:

- concrete supports in times of need
- knowledge of parenting and child development
- children's social and emotional competence
- parental resilience
- social connections

Home based services increase the ability to identify risk in the home and provide a collaborative team response.

What Works:

- DCF social workers triage and refer families to the Strengthening Families programs.
- Supporting inter-agency practice and multi-disciplinary teaming allows the community to respond holistically to families' needs.
- Utilizing community partners' expertise and providing parents with timely access to mental health counseling and substance abuse treatment when it is needed.
- Connecting families to community resources such as housing, child care, transportation, and medical needs.
- Assisting the family in increasing knowledge of parenting strategies and child development through intensive case management and parent education.
- Assisting families with concrete supports in an effort to avert crisis until they are financially stable.
- Collaboration with DCF Family Services social worker to create open communication and develop clear expectations and goals through an effective framework that supports transparent communication and guidelines for frequent case consultation.
- The responsive and intensive wrap around supports that the Family Support Specialists provides across multiple environments to parents and their children.

Community Partners:

- Parent Child Centers
- Agency of Human Services
 - Department for Children and Families - FSD & ESD
 - Department of Health
 - Department of Corrections
- Mental health clinicians and substance treatment providers
- Transportation agencies
- Child care providers
- Domestic abuse and support organizations
- Community Action Agencies
- Housing and Shelter Review Committees

Action Plan:

1. Replicate the Strengthening Families Demonstration Pilot with Parent Child Centers to all AHS Districts.
2. Continue to improve inter-agency practice and multi-disciplinary teaming through monthly meetings with State and local partners and family to track and review progress through referral meetings, case consultation and treatment team meetings.
3. Remove barriers to communication and information sharing through collaborative practice.
4. At regular intervals review treatment goals, self-sufficiency matrix, and results of DCF risk re-assessment to monitor progress and determine whether DCF and program closure is recommended.
5. Integrate successful teaming practices and increase the use of the Strengthening Families Protective Factors Framework among Parent Child Center and Family Services staff.

Pilot Sites

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