

# FAMILY SUCCESS CENTER FAMILY ASSESSMENT OUTCOME EVALUATION EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

United Way of Greater Greensboro (UWGG) and the School of Social Work at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill collaborated on the evaluation of outcomes and assessments related to families engaging in integrated services at the Family Success Center (FSC). 236 families representing 685 people have been served since inception. Financial stability through employment at self-sufficiency wages is the outward goal of the FSC and its members. Positive and sustained results have been achieved in employment, household education, wellness, and financial competency when families complete targeted portions of the FSC curriculum.

Highlights of the current 2016 through 2018 evaluation indicate families have varying levels of commitment and consistency on the path to financial stability.

- Group 1 – Two-year duration of engagement in FSC services
  - Average scores across all seven FPA domains (comprised of 40 FPA items) increased notably from baseline to final assessment.
  - Five of the seven average increases were statistically significant,
  - Moreover, results indicated some amount of growth among these families from baseline to final assessment across 36 of the 40 FPA items
- Group 2 – One-year duration of engagement in FSC services
  - Results indicated increases in average scores from baseline to final assessment across all but one FPA domain (i.e., positive parent-child relationships).
  - Among the domains yielding increased averages over time, four were statistically significant.
  - Moreover, results indicated some amount of growth among these families from baseline to final assessment across all 40 FPA items.

Todd Jensen, PhD, MSW, Research Associate at the Jordan Institute for Families and Research Assistant Professor at the School of Social Work at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill recorded the following observation:

*“The consistency and magnitude of positive change over time among families engaged in FSC services appears promising, and the apparent association between the duration of engagement in FSC services and the magnitude of improvement over time is especially compelling.”*

## BACKGROUND

### EVALUATION SCOPE:

90 families<sup>i</sup> representing 298 individuals were served at the Family Success Center (FSC) at Guilford Child Development (GCD) after the initial pilot period. Service dates range from late 2016 to 2018.

### ASSESSMENT TOOL:

The assessment tool used for FSC is called the Family Partnership Agreement (FPA). FPA is based on the Arizona Self-Sufficiency Matrix, a reputable source widely used in anti-poverty programs. The tool was introduced to FSC by GCD because it is used in the Head Start program (federally-funded preschool, experts in preparing children from low-income households for school). Head Start was the original pool of families recruited for the FSC. GCD added a few financial questions to ensure that intended FSC outcomes could be measured.

There are 40 items on the FPA that fall under seven domains. Many of the items measured reflect the focus on preparing young children for school and engaging parents in that process. The focus and relevance of FPA is valuable as a two-generational tool and perspective.

### ASSESSMENT TIMING:

Members in the Family Success Center (FSC) at Guilford Child Development (GCD) are assessed at intake and again periodically over the course of their enrollment. The FSC coaches aim for assessments to be completed every six months. However, the sample shows that time intervals between assessments ranged from less than six months up to one year. The analysis measured the change between the first assessment completed (“baseline”) and the latest assessment (“final assessment”- which does not mean that the family has completed or withdrawn from FSC).

### ASSESSMENT PROCESS:

The Coaching staff at the FSC are responsible for interviewing each primary adult representing their household and scoring them on the 40 items as follows:

- 3 = a strength, defined as having no unmet needs in this area
- 2 = making progress and connected with resources in this area
- 1 = needs assistance, has unmet needs in this area

## INDICATORS AND OUTCOMES FOR MEASUREMENT:

The indicators and outcomes of focus include those that reflect the pillars of Integrated Services Delivery, one of the evidence-based strategies used in United Way of Greater Greensboro's FSC anti-poverty work.

Research shows that when certain services are “bundled and sequenced” to meet a person's needs, it triples their likelihood of achieving major economic outcomes (such as staying employed, earning an associate's degree, or buying a car), compared to when receiving just one of the services.<sup>ii</sup>

## INTEGRATED SERVICES DELIVERY:

- Work/Income/Health Supports (including public assistance, health insurance)
  - Medical and Dental Care
  - Connection/Support from Other Community Agencies and Services
- Education and Career
  - Employment
  - Job Training or Attending School
  - Educational Level – Continuing or Furthering Education
  - Reading and Writing Skills
  - Communication Skills
- Financial Education and Coaching
  - Income Management and Financial Security
  - Budgeting and Saving
- Health & Wellness
  - Physical and Mental Wellness
  - Comfortable Making Decisions About My Child's Health
  - Immediate and/or Extended Family Support System
  - Connected to Other Parents and Families
  - Managing My Child's Behavior
  - Spending Quality Time with My Child
  - Reading with My Child
  - Supporting Learning at Home
- Basic Needs
  - Safe Housing
  - Affordable Access to Food
  - Transportation Access
  - Basic Life Skills

## METHODOLOGY:

The analysis identified families who had completed at least two assessments within the selected time period (Sept. 2016 – Dec. 2018). Families were grouped into one of three sets: 1) those who were consistently active enough to be assessed at least twice within one year, 2) those who were consistently active enough to be assessed across two years, and 3) those whose interval between assessments was more than 12 months. The third group was excluded from analysis. The analysis examined the change in scores between baseline and final assessments for the two remaining groups. Consistent with the FPA, the 40 assessment items were aggregated into seven composite scores, representing (a) family well-being (9 items;  $\alpha = .74$ ), (b) positive parent-child relationships (4 items;  $\alpha = .90$ ), (c) families as lifelong educators (7 items;  $\alpha = .90$ ), (d) families as learners (4 items;  $\alpha = .88$ ), (e) family engagement in transition (4 items;  $\alpha = .87$ ), (f) family connections to peers and community (6 items;  $\alpha = .78$ ), and (g) families as advocates and leaders (6 items;  $\alpha = .86$ ).<sup>iii</sup> A total score from all 40 items was also estimated for the outcome evaluation.

In addition to changes in average scores from baseline to final assessment, also calculated was the proportion of families who reported growth from baseline to the final assessment across all 40 FPA items. Growth was defined as any movement from a lower response at baseline to a higher response at final assessment (i.e., score of 1 at baseline to a score of 2 or 3 at final assessment; score of 2 at baseline to a score of 3 at final assessment).

## FINDINGS:

As shown in the brief evaluation report, across the 90 families assessed, the results of outcome evaluation data suggest that, on average, families experienced significant gains in multiple FPA domains assessed by the Family Success Center (FSC).

Group 1: Among families with final assessments conducted in both 2017 and 2018 ( $n = 19$ ), the data suggest that due to a longer duration of engagement in FSC services (i.e., about two years), average scores across all seven FPA domains increased notably from baseline to final assessment. Five of the seven average increases were statistically significant, with the exceptions of positive parent-child relationships and families as lifelong educators. Average total FPA scores also yielded a significant increase from baseline to final assessment. Moreover, results indicated some amount of growth among these families from baseline to final assessment across 36 of the FPA items—the remaining four items had an insufficient number of valid responses (likely because the item did not currently apply to the family's situation) to estimate growth over time. See the brief report for more details.

Group 2: Similar, but slightly attenuated, gains were observed among families engaged in FSC services over the course of one year ( $n = 71$ ). Results indicated increases in average scores from baseline to final assessment across all but one FPA domain (i.e., positive parent-child relationships). Among the domains yielding increased averages over time, four were statistically significant. Average total FPA scores also yielded a significant increase from baseline to final assessment in this group of families. Moreover, results indicated some amount of growth among these families from baseline to final assessment across all 40 FPA items. See the brief report for more details.

Taken together, the results provide some evidence that FSC services are likely supporting families over time on the path to greater financial stability and well-being. Longer periods of engagement in FSC services appear to be associated with higher levels of improvement over time.

#### ADDITIONAL OBSERVATIONS:

- An examination of assessment dates over four years showed a pattern of stops and starts, which fits the anecdotal evidence from the FSC staff. Individuals may enroll and then not come to class but reappear a year later with fresh motivation. Or they may engage enthusiastically for a while and then lose steam due to a major illness or injury, a new pregnancy, a family member needing their care, or other “life” issues. Some stop coming to the FSC because they’ve started working during the hours the FSC is open, but they’ll stay engaged with their coach to address any needs and get connected to additional resources. Also, if individuals lose a job, they tend to come back to the FSC to get help finding another position.
- Life changes may cause volatility in individual or household scores over time. For example, a family might warrant a score of 3 (i.e., area of strength) for employment until they get laid off, after which they warrant a score of 1 (i.e., needs assistance). As another example, a family might warrant a score of 3 for completing some education, but later identify new educational needs that haven’t been addressed yet, thus warranting a new score of 1 or 2. Consequently, some variation in scores are expected over time that result from changes in life circumstances. Although this adds complexity to the interpretation of findings, upward trends exist across nearly all 40 FPA items for families engaged in FSC services. Especially notable are the relative gains among families engaging in FSC services over the course of two years. The relative magnitude of gains among this group is consistent with the view that the road to financial stability and well-being can be a long one, and efforts to invest in the long-term engagement of families in FSC services are warranted.
- The evaluation did not include a comparison group (unlike the initial FSC pilot evaluation during 2015-2016). As a result, it is challenging to determine what amount of change families might have experienced during the evaluation period had they not engaged in FSC services. This methodological limitation notwithstanding, the consistency and magnitude of positive change over time among families engaged in FSC services appears promising. The apparent association between the duration of engagement in FSC services and the magnitude of improvement over time is especially compelling.

## FSC DEMOGRAPHICS

As of February 2019, the composition of families/households served by the FSC since inception is as follows: 236 households comprised of 685 individuals (323 adults and 362 children).

- Age
  - 0-17: 362
  - 18-24: 58
  - 25-64: 256
  - 65+: 9
  
- Gender
  - Male: 246
  - Female: 434
  - Not specified: 5
  
- Race and Ethnicity<sup>iv</sup>
  - African American: 505
  - White: 104
  - Asian: 14
  - Other: 40
  - Multiple: 19
  - Hispanic or Latino: 79
  - Native American or Pacific Islander: 4
  - Unspecified: 5

## ENDNOTES

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<sup>i</sup> Family” in the Family Success Center is defined as “whoever lives in the household and considers themselves family”. The term “household” is used interchangeably with “family”.

<sup>ii</sup> <http://www.aecf.org/m/resourcedoc/aecf-CWFfosteringFES3modelsites-2010.pdf>

<sup>iii</sup> The alpha ( $\alpha$ ) values represent levels of internal consistent reliability—essentially a measure of how well the items perform together as part of the same scale. Values closer to 1 mean closer alignment, lending confidence to the decision to average scores across items together to create a composite/average score.

<sup>iv</sup> Families can check more than one race, resulting in totals more than 685.

# Family Success Center

## Family Assessment Outcome Evaluation - Sept. 2016 – Dec. 2018

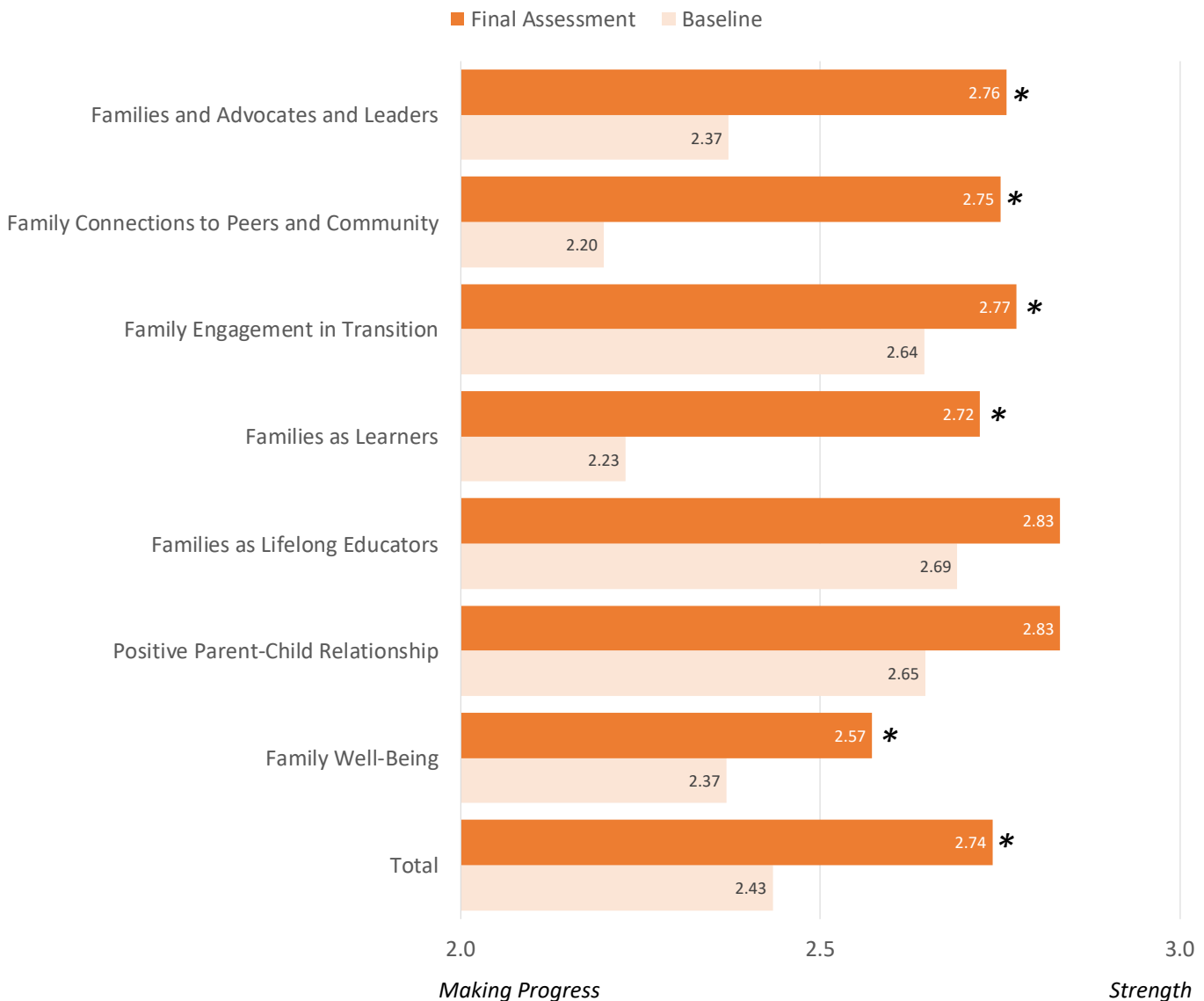
**90** Families assessed

**40** Median number of weeks between baseline and final assessment

Families engaged in the Family Success Center in 2017 and 2018 reported **significant increases** in assessment scores over time.





































### Families Assessed Over Two Years

Change in Average Scores - 2 Years (n = 19)



\*Indicates significant difference from baseline at  $p < .10$ , one-tailed paired-samples t-tests. Each score reported was generated from a composite average across items associated with the construct.

## % of Families Reporting **Growth** Over Two Years (*n* = 19)

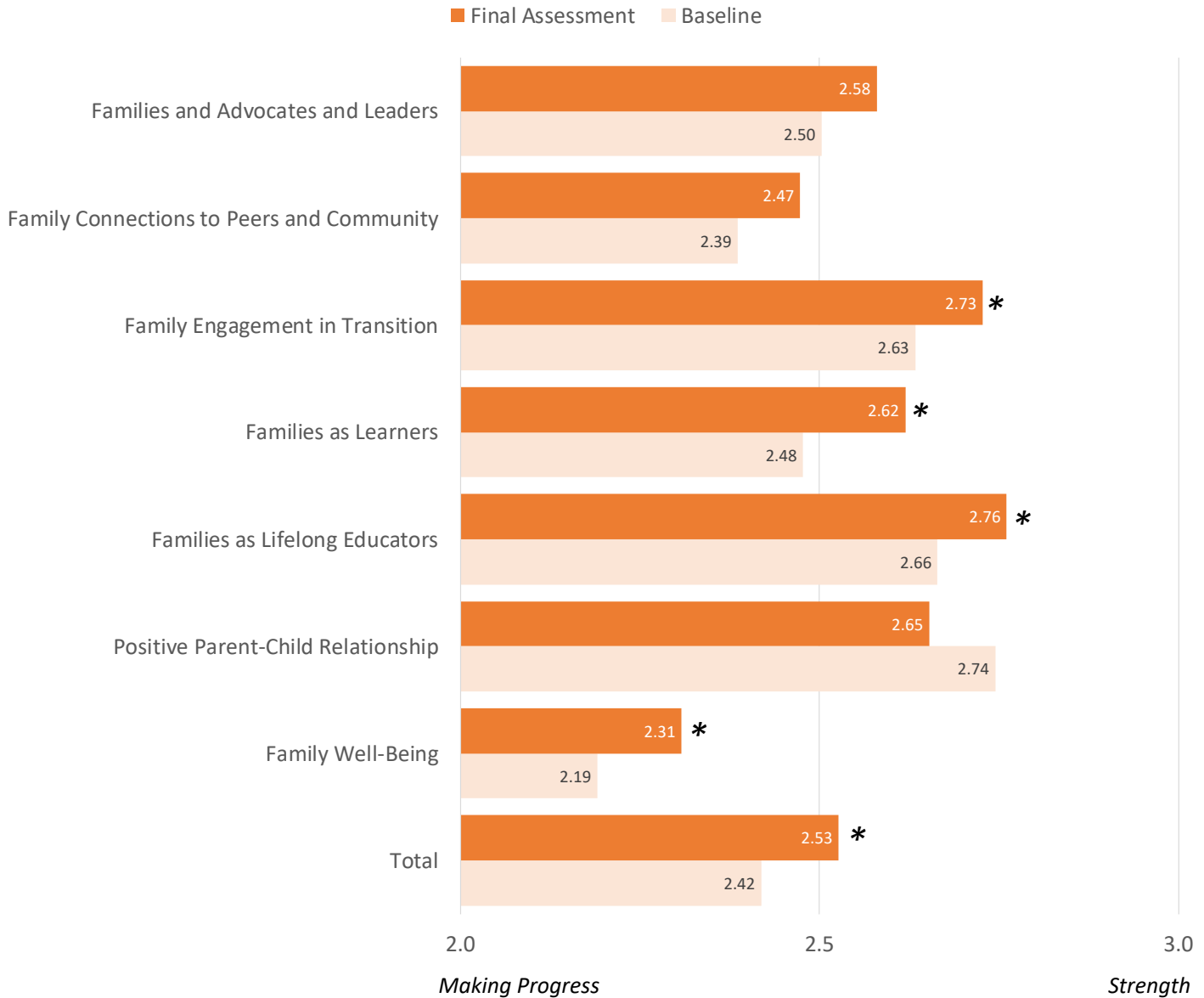
FAMILY WELL-BEING		
Employment		78%
Job Training or Attending School		60%
Budget and Saving		45%
Transportation Access		42%
Income Management & Financial Security		36%
Safe Housing		25%
Affordable Access to Food, Meal Preparation, Healthy Living		9%
Physical and Mental Wellness		8%
Medical and Dental Care		NA
POSITIVE PARENT-CHILD RELATIONSHIP		
Developing Routines for My Child		33%
Managing My Child's Behavior		27%
Spending Quality Time with My Child		27%
Actively Involved with My Child		25%
FAMILIES AS LIFELONG EDUCATORS		
Knowledge and Understanding of Child Development		50%
Supporting Educational Plans for My Child		42%
Reading with My Child and other Educational Activities		33%
Supporting Learning at Home		27%
Communicating with My Child's Teachers		18%
My Child's Behavior in School Is Acceptable		17%
My Child Attends School Regularly		NA
FAMILIES AS LEARNERS		
Educational Level – Continuing or Furthering Education		58%
Reading and Writing Skills		58%
Communication Skills (Ability to express yourself positively and effectively)		50%
Basic Life Skills (Cooking, Socialization, Time Management, etc.)		36%
FAMILY ENGAGEMENT IN TRANSITION		
Preparation Toward Elementary School		43%
Understanding the Transitioning Process		40%
My Child Adapts to School		36%
Comfortable with New Teachers and Program		11%
FAMILY CONNECTIONS TO PEERS AND COMMUNITY		
Connected to Other Parents and Families with Young Children		60%
Connection/Support from Other Community Agencies and Services		60%
Immediate and/or Extended Family Support System		50%
Connection/Support with Local School		50%
Other Family Members in Household Have Unmet Needs		NA
Connected to Special Services for My Child (IEP, IFSP, etc.)		NA
FAMILIES AS ADVOCATES AND LEADERS		
Volunteering in My Child's Classroom and School		78%
Volunteering in My Community		75%
Awareness of Issues that Impact Young Children and Families		45%
Engagement in My Child's Education		27%
Comfortable Making Decisions About My Child's Health		27%
Confident in Speaking Up for My Child and Family		27%

*\*Across items, families selected one of three responses: (a) Needs Assistance, (b) Making Progress, and (c) Strength. In this chart, "growth" is defined as any movement from a lower response at baseline to a higher response at final assessment. NA = not applicable given low response rate.*











































# Families Assessed Over One Year

Change in Average Scores - 1 Year (n = 71)



\*Indicates significant difference from baseline at  $p < .10$ , one-tailed paired-samples t-tests. Each score reported was generated from a composite average across items associated with the construct.

## % of Families Reporting **Growth** Over One Year (n = 71)

FAMILY WELL-BEING		
Employment		34%
Job Training or Attending School		32%
Budget and Saving		30%
Income Management & Financial Security		29%
Physical and Mental Wellness		26%
Medical and Dental Care		24%
Transportation Access		22%
Safe Housing		21%
Affordable Access to Food, Meal Preparation, Healthy Living		21%
POSITIVE PARENT-CHILD RELATIONSHIP		
Developing Routines for My Child		14%
Managing My Child's Behavior		12%
Spending Quality Time with My Child		10%
Actively Involved with My Child		7%
FAMILIES AS LIFELONG EDUCATORS		
Knowledge and Understanding of Child Development		23%
Communicating with My Child's Teachers		19%
Reading with My Child and other Educational Activities		18%
Supporting Educational Plans for My Child		17%
Supporting Learning at Home		14%
My Child's Behavior in School Is Acceptable		11%
My Child Attends School Regularly		7%
FAMILIES AS LEARNERS		
Educational Level – Continuing or Furthering Education		28%
Communication Skills (Ability to express yourself positively and effectively)		23%
Reading and Writing Skills		17%
Basic Life Skills (Cooking, Socialization, Time Management, etc.)		16%
FAMILY ENGAGEMENT IN TRANSITION		
Understanding the Transitioning Process		20%
Comfortable with New Teachers and Program		20%
Preparation Toward Elementary School		19%
My Child Adapts to School		15%
FAMILY CONNECTIONS TO PEERS AND COMMUNITY		
Connected to Other Parents and Families with Young Children		25%
Connection/Support with Local School		25%
Connected to Special Services for My Child (IEP, IFSP, etc.)		25%
Connection/Support from Other Community Agencies and Services		23%
Immediate and/or Extended Family Support System		19%
Other Family Members in Household Have Unmet Needs		17%
FAMILIES AS ADVOCATES AND LEADERS		
Volunteering in My Community		26%
Volunteering in My Child's Classroom and School		20%
Awareness of Issues that Impact Young Children and Families		12%
Engagement in My Child's Education		9%
Comfortable Making Decisions About My Child's Health		9%
Confident in Speaking Up for My Child and Family		5%

*\*Across items, families selected one of three responses: (a) Needs Assistance, (b) Making Progress, and (c) Strength. In this chart, "growth" is defined as any movement from a lower response at baseline to a higher response at final assessment. NA = not applicable given low response rate.*