



Family Resource Centers

FY2021-2022 Strategy Summary

Prepared by Social Policy Research Associates | October 2022

The six Family Resource Centers (FRCs) funded by OFCY were designed to serve as welcoming centers in the community that meet the holistic needs of families where they live and support the development and learning of young children to ensure that they are happy, healthy, and better prepared for success in kindergarten and elementary school. Participating families benefited from FRCs’ early childhood programming as well as various supports intended to give them the knowledge, tools, and confidence to advocate for themselves, navigate systems, and strengthen their foundation of resiliency. To summarize strategy progress and achievements, this report draws on:

- Attendance records
- Program reports
- A focus group with program staff at three agencies that operate FRCs (East Bay Agency for Children, Lincoln, and Lotus Bloom)

“We’re doing a lot of focus groups, supporting parents and seeing what they need, not just material things, right, like food or clothing, but also their interior too, and connecting them to different resources to see what is it that they need so that they can be healthy, and we can have healthy children too.”

-Staff, Lincoln’s

New Highland Academy and Rise Community School

Funded Programs

Central Family Resource Center - East Bay Agency for Children	Healthy Havenscourt Early Care & Kinder Readiness Hub - BANANAS, Inc	New Highland Academy and Rise Community School (NH/R) - Lincoln
Hawthorne Family Resource Center - East Bay Agency for Children	Multicultural Family Resource Centers - Lotus Bloom	School Readiness Playgroups - Lotus Bloom

Photo on the cover courtesy of Lotus Bloom’s Multicultural FRC.

Strategy Results

Beginning in the 2019–2022 funding cycle, OFCY adopted a Results Based Accountability (RBA) framework to assess its role in contributing toward city-wide goals. The RBA model is a comprehensive approach for assessing the quantity of services provided by programs, the quality of those services, and the effect of those services on the lives of children, youth, and families. It does this by addressing **three guiding questions: (1) How much did we do? (2) How well did we do it? (3) Is anyone better off?**

Results-Based Accountability Results

How much did we do?	
Number of Programs Funded	6
Number of Children Served	690
Number of Adults Served	990
Total Hours of Service Provided	30,175
Average Hours of Service per Child Participant	25
Average Hours of Service per Adult Participant	13
How well did we do it?	
Enrollment: Average progress toward projected number of youth served ¹	148%
Average progress toward projected number of adults served.	137%
Total Service Hours: Average progress toward projected total hours of service	94%
Average Hours of Service: Average progress toward projected average hours of service	85%
Supportive Environment: Parents and caregivers who say that program staff make them feel comfortable and supported	94%
Diversity and Inclusion: Parents and caregivers who agreed that program staff work well with families from different backgrounds	93%
Is Anyone Better Off?	
Connections to Resources: Parents and caregivers who report that staff refer them to other programs and resources	91%
Knowledge of Child Development: Parents and caregivers who say the program helped them identify their child's needs	90%
Skills to Manage Behavior: Parents and caregivers who say the program helped them respond effectively when their child is upset	87%

¹ At the start of the fiscal year, programs estimate their annual enrollment and the total number of hours of service they will provide. Progress is calculated as the actual enrollment divided by the projected enrollment.

The remainder of this report includes the following sections aligned with this RBA framework:

- 1) Overview of Programs and Participants
- 2) How much did the programs provide?
- 3) How well did programs do it?
- 4) Is anyone better off as a result of the strategy's work?

“I just wanted to express how much [the emergency financial assistance] has helped me & my children’s life. Life hasn’t been easy for anyone lately.

–Parent, BANANAS’

Healthy Havenscourt Early Care & Kinder Readiness Hub



Photo Courtesy of East Bay Agency for Children’s Hawthorne’s FRC

Programs and Participants

FRCs serve the diverse communities of Oakland, offering services and programming in multiple languages.

During FY2021-2022, **690 children and 990 adults were served by FRCs** located in under-resourced neighborhoods. Rooted in the needs of the Oakland families they serve, FRCs built community while providing a range of services including play groups, parent education classes, case management, referrals to community resources, and adult education classes, including ESL. As FRC services and programs transitioned from virtual to hybrid, and eventually, to in-person, FRCs greeted returning families and welcomed new ones, many from immigrant and newcomer populations. FRCs listened to, connected with, and supported diverse families in multiple languages, including Arabic, Amharic, Mam, Spanish, and Tigrinya. FRCs located on school sites provided support to Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) students and their families, most of whom qualified for free and reduced school meals.

FRCs are collaborative, working with local community organizations and schools to provide wrap around supports to Oakland families.

To recruit families, FRCs made concerted efforts to connect to and build relationships with families, while also relying on warm referrals from partners and word of mouth communication. Because of the past support FRCs have provided to families in their respective communities, families often heard about their services and supports through their social contacts. FRCs were also designed to be collaborative in nature, and their partners, including local community-based nonprofits and schools, often referred families to them. Some FRCs were also located on OUSD campuses and collaborated with the associated school(s). For example, Lincoln's New Highland Academy and Rise Community School FRC, located on campus, provided tailored support to the school community, such as providing Spanish and Mam translation for teachers as they communicated with families.

School-based FRCs had to increase their efforts to engage with families during the months when OUSD did not permit families on campus.

Program Spotlight

To inform this report, SPR conducted a focus group with program staff from three agencies:

Lotus Bloom’s Multicultural Family Resource Centers – Lotus Bloom is a network of three family resource centers in Oakland that has been in operation since 2006. Their mission is “to provide a safe, welcoming and inclusive space to traditionally underserved populations to come together as a community to provide children with a rich learning foundation.”²

East Bay Agency for Children’s Hawthorne & Central Family Resource Centers – With FRCs located in the Fruitvale District on the campus of Achieve Academy. at the OUSD Lakeview Campus, the East Bay Agency for Children (EBAC) strives to improve “the well-being of children, youth and families by reducing the impact of trauma and social inequities.”³

Lincoln’s New Highland Rise Family Resource Center – Lincoln’s FRC is a school-based center that serves families of New Highland Academy and RISE Community School in East Oakland. Their primary goal is “to build on the strengths of families and develop their capacity for supporting the healthy development and educational objectives of their children.”⁴

As COVID-19 cases fluctuated and safety protocols changed, FRCs continued to provide vital services by offering in-person, virtual, or hybrid formats.

FRCs’ ability to be flexible and responsive to challenges was especially critical during the COVID-19 pandemic. FRCs located on OUSD campuses had the added challenge of engaging families while parents and caregivers were banned from being on school sites. As a result, FRCs made concerted efforts to increase their visibility by conducting “sidewalk outreach.” Staff were forced to introduce themselves to new parents while on opposite sides of the school gate. They also set up outreach

² <https://www.lotusbloomfamily.org/mission.html>

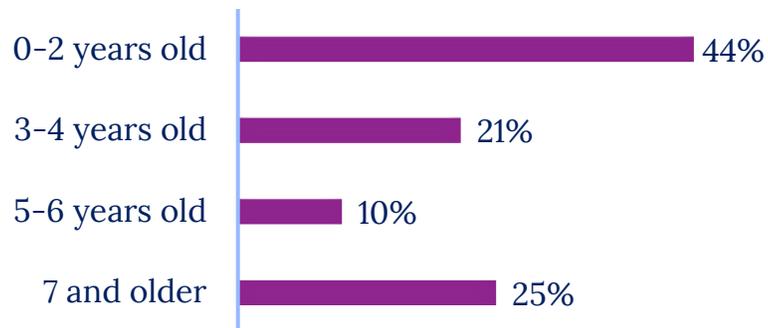
³ <https://www.ebac.org/about/mission.asp>

⁴ <https://lincolnfamilies.org/programs-services/well-being/family-resource-center>

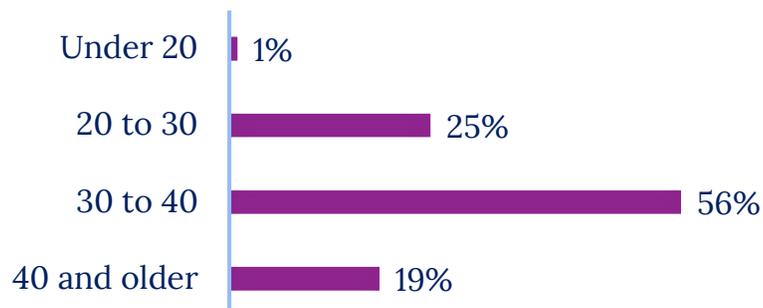
tables in front of the school to distribute informational flyers and brochures, made phone calls, and sent text messages.

About half of participants in FRC programs were parents or caregivers (58%). As shown below, close to two-thirds of the children served were under 5 years old.

Age of Child Participants



Age of Adult Participants

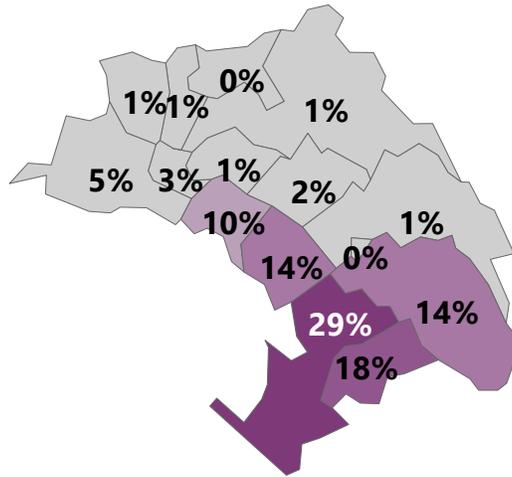


58% of FRC participants were parents, compared to 42% of children. Close to two-thirds of the children served were under 5 years old.

As illustrated on the following page, most families lived in zip codes located along the 880 corridor and in West Oakland, including neighborhoods with a high percentage of unemployment, unaffordable housing, and unsheltered homelessness.

Over 80% of FRC participants lived in East Oakland along the 880 Corridor. Similarly, Latinx and Black families comprised about 80% of participants.

Zip Code of Residence

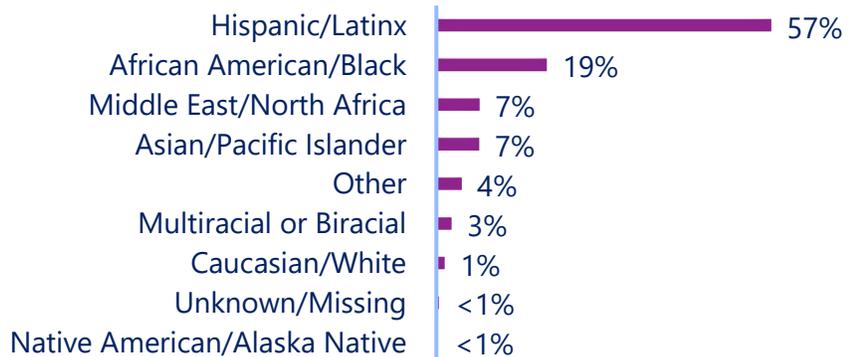


94621: Webster Tract, Coliseum	29%
94603: Sobrante Park, Elmhurst	18%
94601: Fruitvale	14%
94605: Eastmont, Havenscourt	14%
94606: Highland Park, East Lake	10%
94607: West Oakland, Chinatown	5%

Table lists zipcodes where at least 5% of participants live.

As shown in the graph below, close to 80% of participants identified as Latinx or Black. The racial composition of children and adults was similar.

Race/Ethnicity of FRC Participants



How Much Did Programs Do?

In FY21-22, **programs provided 30,175 hours of service.** Out of precaution and necessity, FRC programs began the fiscal year delivering most of their services virtually with some limited in-person programming, in many cases reducing the number of service hours they were able to provide. For



Programs began the year delivering mostly virtual services and, in many cases, capping enrollment in in-person programming.

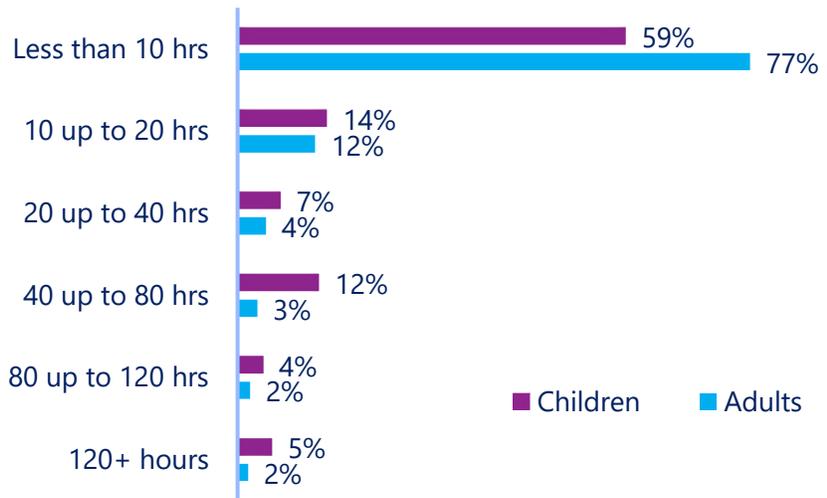
example, Lotus Bloom capped attendance to their playgroups to eleven families at its FRCs due to pandemic precautions and staffing constraints. As a result, families often lined up thirty minutes before the program to ensure a spot in the playgroup. To expand their reach, Lotus Bloom also published virtual content for families to watch and participate in each week. Staff noted that families expressed appreciation for both in-person and virtual offerings, noting that their children had a place to play, learn, and grow.

As noted previously, FRC programs located on OUSD campuses had the added challenge of adhering to OUSD's safety protocols, which banned parents and caregivers from school sites. At the beginning of quarter one, programs were not offering in-person services. In addition, virtual services like parent-child playgroups were often shortened to keep young children engaged and avoid the negative effects of prolonged screen time. As COVID-19 cases began to decline, school-based FRCs slowly rolled out in-person services. For example, by quarter two, the services at East Bay Agency for Children's Hawthorne FRC were 50% virtual and 50% in-person. This allowed families to gain access to their food pantry and community closet for necessities like diapers, dish soap, cooking oil, shampoo, deodorant, etc.

Programs tailored their services to meet the needs and desires of families. As shown on the following page, while most participants received light touch services and spent less than 10 hours in programming, 9% of children and 4% adults spent more than 80 hours in programming.

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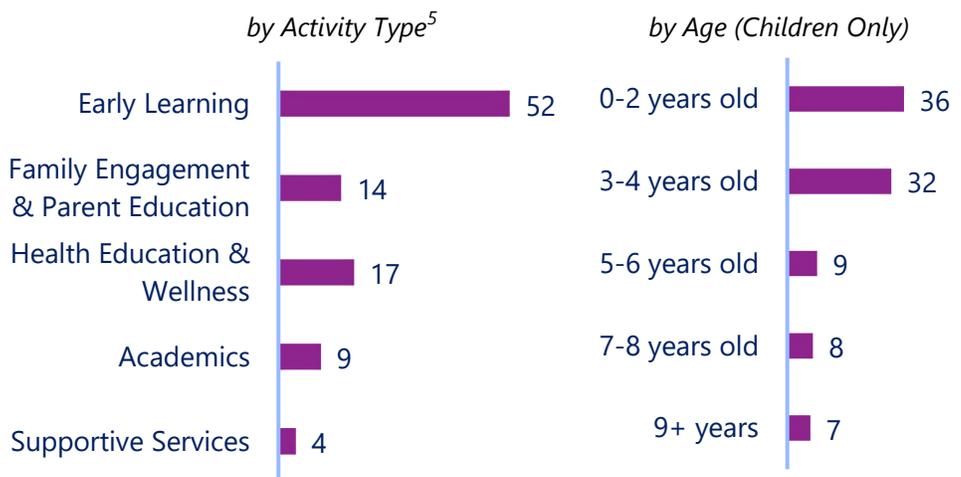
Hours of Attendance



The amount of time that participants spent in programming depended on the type of services they received. Families who primarily received supportive services spent less time in programming than those enrolled in playgroups. As shown below, those engaged in early learning activities, such as playgroups, spent an average of 52 hours in those activities, while families spent fewer hours engaged in other services. Because families participating in early learning activities tended to have younger children, children under 5 tended to spend more time in FRC programming than older children.

Average Hours of Participation

On average, children and adults attending early learning services, such as playgroups, spent the most time in programming.

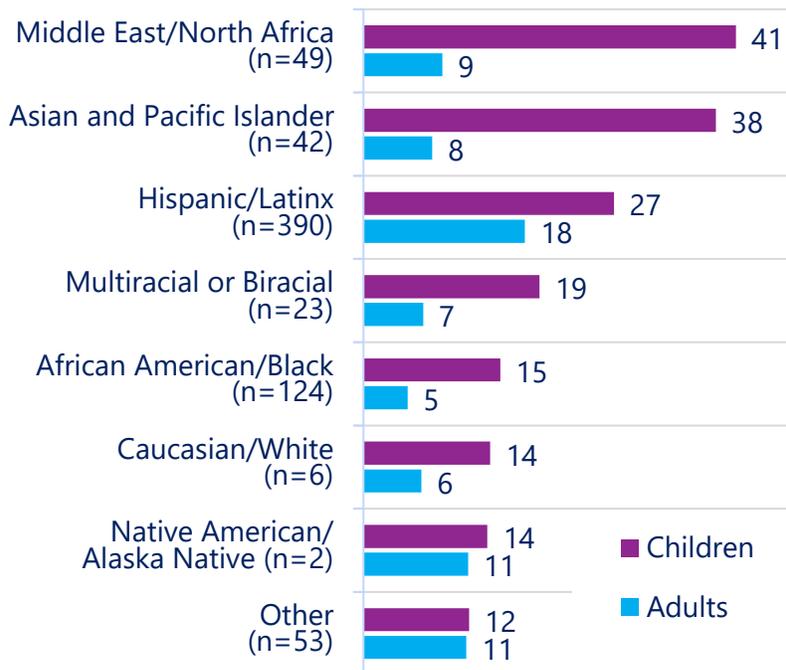


⁵ Averages include participants who had at least one attendance record in the relevant activity.

The level of participation varied by race/ethnicity but there was no discernable pattern between child participants and adult participants.

As shown in the graph below, the level of participation varied by race/ethnicity but there was no discernable pattern between child participants and adult participants. Middle Eastern/North African families and Asian and Pacific Islander children had the highest average hours of service, while Latinx adults spent more time in programs compared to other adults.

Average Hours by Race

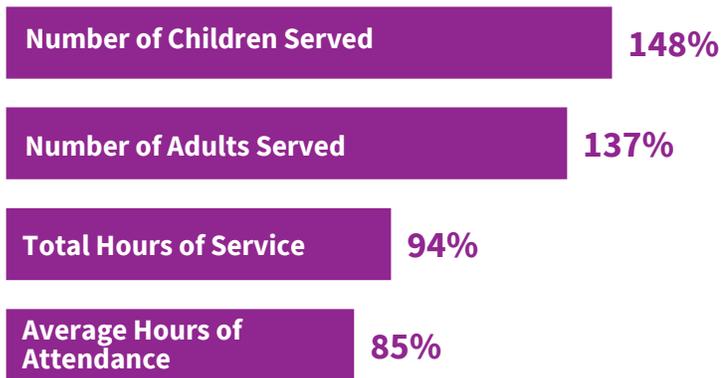


How Well Did Programs Do It?

OFCY tracks a series of indicators to assess how well grantees in each strategy have implemented their programming. The first three indicators include progress toward projected program enrollment, total hours of service, and average hours of service per participant. On average, programs exceeded the number of children and youth they projected serving and came close to providing their projected total hours of service.

FRC programs were shaped by the needs and experiences of children, families, and the community. On average, programs exceeded the number of children and adults they projected serving and came close to providing their projected total hours

Program Performance: Progress Toward Projections



In addition to these performance measures, the FRC strategy has indicators captured through parent surveys that assess key dimensions of program quality, including the creation of a supportive environment, respect for diversity and inclusion, and connection to resources. As demonstrated on the right, the 254 parents and caregivers that completed a survey gave high ratings in these areas, with 94% of parents and caregivers reporting that program staff made them feel comfortable and supported.

Program Quality: Parent/Caregiver Survey Responses (n=254)

Supportive Environment

94%

Parents and caregivers who say that program staff make them feel comfortable and supported

Diversity and Inclusion

93%

Parents and caregivers who agreed that the program staff work well with families from different backgrounds

Over 90% of surveyed parents and caregivers agreed that program staff made them feel supported and that programs work well with families from different backgrounds.

To remain responsive to community needs and provide tailored services, FRCs continually gathered feedback from families and children. They did this both formally and informally through surveys, focus groups, one-on-one

conversations, and child development screenings. Staff then made necessary changes based on feedback to better support families. FRCs often prioritized regular check-ins with families to hear about challenges they were facing. Lotus Bloom family navigators checked in weekly with families via phone or text to identify their unique needs and provide referrals and case management support. These check-ins were also an opportunity for staff to connect with and build rapport with families.

To create a welcoming and supportive environment for families, FRCs created a space where families feel at home, listened to, and cared for as soon as they walk in the door. Lincoln's New Highland Academy and Rise Community School and Lotus Bloom's FRCs helped families get acquainted with their spaces by providing tours. Lotus Bloom also played jazz music, lit lavender incense, and set up their space to feel like a living room to help families relax. Lincoln's New Highland Academy and Rise Community School staff offered bags of coffee and snacks to take home. FRCs also walk new families through registration processes and answer any questions families have about their services and programs.

“There's a sense of trust, a sense of being part of community, I think that is established from, again, the moment they come into the space. We got their back; we're trying to find out how we can best support them.”

-Staff, Lotus Bloom's Multicultural FRCs

To support diversity and inclusion, FRCs made efforts to ensure that their programs and staff reflected families and their communities. Staff from East Bay Agency for Children and Lotus Bloom noted that they hired former participants and members of the communities they served. At its FRCs,

To bolster belonging and inclusion, FRCs hired from the communities they serve and invested in materials that reflect families' backgrounds and cultures.

Lotus Bloom also created volunteer opportunities for families to engage in, such as working in their community garden, leading a sing along, or preparing snacks for playgroups. FRCs shared their hope that by seeing people that look like them and/or live in their neighborhood, families would have a bolstered sense of familiarity and connection. Additionally, FRCs ensured that their curriculum and materials reflected the community. Recently, as more Arabic-speaking families moved to Oakland and started attending their programming, Lotus Bloom's Multicultural FRCs began incorporating Arabic into their circle time during playgroups and investing in Arabic books.

“So, when families see [materials in their language], they're like, "Oh, they got me, they see me." They know that this is my people right here.”

-Staff, Lotus Bloom's Multicultural FRCs



Photo Courtesy of Lotus Bloom's Multicultural FRCs

Is Anyone Better Off?

At least 85% of parents and caregivers agreed that the FRCs supported their connection to resources, knowledge of child development and skills to manage behavior.

To assess if families served by FRCs are better off because of their involvement, OFCY uses parent/caregiver surveys to assess the influence of the program on parents' and caregivers' knowledge of child development, skills to manage child behavior, and connections to other resources. As shown below, over 85% of parents and caregivers agreed that the FRCs supported them in these areas.

Program Quality: Parent/Caregiver Survey Results (n=254)

Connections to Resources

91%

Parents/caregivers who report that staff refer them to programs and resources that can help their family

Knowledge of Child Development

90%

Parents and caregivers who say the program helped them to identify their child's needs

Skills to Manage Behavior

87%

Parents and caregivers who say the program helped them to respond effectively when their child is upset

In addition to these primary indicators, participant survey data, staff reports, and program focus groups tell a more comprehensive story about the ways that FRCs fostered connection amongst families and children, strengthened parents' and caregivers' knowledge of children's healthy development, and provided needed supports to families as they grow and navigate challenges.

FRC programs provided a wide range of supports and services for both children and families, focusing on ensuring they had what they need to grow and thrive. FRCs supported parents and caregivers in understanding child development, gaining tools and strategies to support children's wellbeing, strengthening self-advocacy and leadership skills, accessing resources, and building community. Building community was especially vital during the pandemic when many families experienced social isolation. To support young children, FRCs focused on school readiness, self-regulation, literacy, healthy development, and social-emotional skills.

Increased Social Connection

FRCs provided both children and adults with opportunities to socialize with one another during a time of great isolation. Playgroups allowed children to connect with one another while they explored their interests and developed social-emotional skills. For example, Lotus Bloom's playgroups were designed to help children develop their fine and gross motor skills, support literacy and language, and expose them to various enrichment activities. Staff also administered child development assessments during playgroups to track children's progress. These playgroups also provided time for parents and caregivers to connect with one another, share their experiences, and build community. Lotus Bloom staff reported that many families shared that they feel more connected to other families because of the bonds established during playgroups. FRCs noted that these connections support adults' mental health and decreases the social isolation they experienced during the pandemic. At its FRCs, East Bay Agency for Children facilitated virtual parent-child education support groups and outdoor in-person events that allowed families to connect and share about their pandemic experiences. At

FRC playgroups were an opportunity for both children and parents/caregivers to connect during a time of increased isolation, as well as learn and grow.

Lincoln's New Highland Academy and Rise Community School, staff hosted a bilingual reading/book club to support children's literacy and strengthen adults' understanding of how to support their child's growth and passion for reading.

“Having a group where parents can share what has been working for them allows parents to not only learn from the group educator, but from each other.”

-Staff, East Bay Agency for Children's Central FRC

Increased Knowledge and Skills to Support Child Development

FRCs provided families opportunities to strengthen their parenting skills and build on their knowledge of healthy child development, thus strengthening their ability to identify and address their children's needs. Families engaged in workshops and trainings where they learned about a whole range of topics, including trauma-informed care, early literacy support, parent-child engagement through play, effective communication with children, conflict resolution, proactive parenting strategies, and children's developmental ages and stages. At East Bay Agency for Children's Hawthorne FRC, a group educator provided tips and tools for parents; they modeled various communication strategies and encouraged families to practice at home. Hawthorne FRC also provided parenting and education coaching services in Spanish, Mam, and English. Staff followed up with parents and caregivers after group activities to answer questions, get feedback, and connect them to more resources. At East Bay Agency for Children's Central FRC, staff offered a virtual workshop for families with children experiencing bereavement. These

Workshops and trainings for parents and caregivers allowed them to strengthen their knowledge about child development and better address their child's needs.

Families received tailored support and warm referrals to help them overcome challenges and received the assistance they needed to achieve their goals.

workshops focused on the developmental stages of young children's grief, caregiver self-care, and community resource education.

Access to Resources

FRCs provided resources and referrals to families as they grew and as they navigated challenges in their lives. This support was especially critical as families experienced additional barriers during the pandemic, which exacerbated many social challenges. FRCs delivered one-on-one case management services to help families navigate complicated systems, including connecting them to legal support. By regularly checking in with families and talking amongst staff to identify the community's high-priority needs, they were able to offer a range of targeted assistance related to various issues including:

- **Child Care & School** - navigation services, referrals for subsidies, enrollment support, back-to-school materials
- **Financial Support** - emergency financial assistance, financial coaching, utility and housing assistance
- **Basic Needs** - food, clothing, diapers, householding cleaning items, toys, CalFresh application support
- **Career Advancement** - career development, employment search support, resume writing, job application support
- **Language Access** - English and Spanish classes, multilingual book clubs and books
- **Health and Safety** - MediCal application support, personal protective equipment (PPE), hygiene kits

“By bolstering their limited income with these public benefits and resources, families can stretch their dollars for other essentials such as rent.”

-Staff, East Bay Agency for Children's Hawthorne FRC

Recognizing the significant need for wellness and mental health supports, FRC staff created opportunities for families to learn about and employ new self-care, self-reflection, and relaxation practices.

FRCs also addressed communities' heightened need for mental health and wellness support during the pandemic. In response to families' stress and anxiety, Lotus Bloom began offering wellness workshops for both children and adults at its FRCs. Staff reported that parents and caregivers expressed gratitude for this space and shared how they incorporated their learnings into their self-care and wellness routines. At Lincoln's New Highland Academy and Rise Community School, both parents and children learned about how their urban garden can be a place for self-reflection and relaxation.

"We're focusing a lot on the mental health of parents and the families, because if our parents are good, our kids are going to be good. So that's one of our biggest focus."

-Staff, Lincoln's New Highland Academy and Rise Community School

Parents who spent at least six months in their program reported higher outcomes in all areas measured by the survey.

Outcomes by Parent/Caregiver Subgroups

An analysis of survey responses by race, gender, and role (father, mother, grandparent, other) revealed some differences in outcomes.⁶ Within individual and across programs, Latinx parents/caregivers were more likely than others to report strong progress around developing confidence in managing their children's behavior.

Parents who spent at least six months in their program reported higher outcomes in all areas measured by the survey, including family involvement in their child's learning, parental confidence, access to resources, and parental leadership.

⁶ All findings were statistically significant at $p < .05$ and were consistent both within individual programs and across all programs in the strategy.

Conclusion

OFCY-funded FRCs served 690 children and 990 adults, providing a range of services including play groups, parent education classes, case management, referrals to community resources, and adult education classes. Programs tailored their services to meet the needs and desires of families, with some receiving light touch services and others spending over 100 hours in programming. Results from a survey of parents and caregivers demonstrated that programs supported parents and caregivers in understanding child development, gaining tools and strategies to support children's wellbeing, strengthening self-advocacy and leadership skills, accessing resources, and building community.



Photo Courtesy of Lotus Bloom's Multicultural FRC