

FIRST THINGS FIRST

Community Voices: Families' Experiences & Outcomes From Accessing Family Resource Centers

Summary Highlights

This summary includes takeaways from a report written by Listen4Good. Primary drafting and analysis was completed by Senior Data Analyst, Angela Hall, with support from Senior Manager, Data Insights Rebecca Klein, Director of Programs and Learning Rebecca Koladycz, and Executive Director Valerie Threlfall.

Background on the First Things First & Listen4Good Partnership

First Things First (FTF), with support from a regional Arizona-based foundation, worked with 23 organizations (grant partners) that run Family Resource Centers (FRCs) to participate in Listen4Good. Listen4Good (L4G) is a national feedback capacity-building program whose mission is to center and uplift client voice by promoting high-quality feedback practices in the social sector. Through 1:1 coaching and proprietary tools, L4G helps nonprofits to gather and respond to client experience feedback from their community to improve outcomes. L4G also aggregates information from communities to be used by funders and systems players to inform their own work.

The goals of this partnership were to:

- a) Increase grant partners' capacity to collect and use feedback from the families they serve for continuous programmatic and organizational improvement;
- b) Illuminate the collective work of FRCs—identifying how families use FRCs and how FRCs fill gaps in family services provided in Arizona;
- c) Provide community-level data to inform FTF's own continuous quality improvement of programmatic strategy and internal technical assistance efforts supporting FRCs; and
- d) Provide community-level data to ground a regional advocacy strategy to garner more support for FRCs and leverage other state-level agency funders in Arizona to promote additional coordination and unlock additional resources.

Key Findings

FRCs play an important role as service providers and are meeting the needs of families.

Overall, families who visit FRCs report very positive experiences. They are very likely to recommend FRCs to friends and family members, and report having their needs met and feeling respected by staff:

- Clients gave FRCs a Net Promoter Score® (NPS) of 95—a much higher score compared to the L4G benchmark of 76.¹
- 94% of clients said their needs are met extremely (69%) or very well (25%); and
- 99% of clients said they always (96%) or usually (4%) feel respected by staff.²

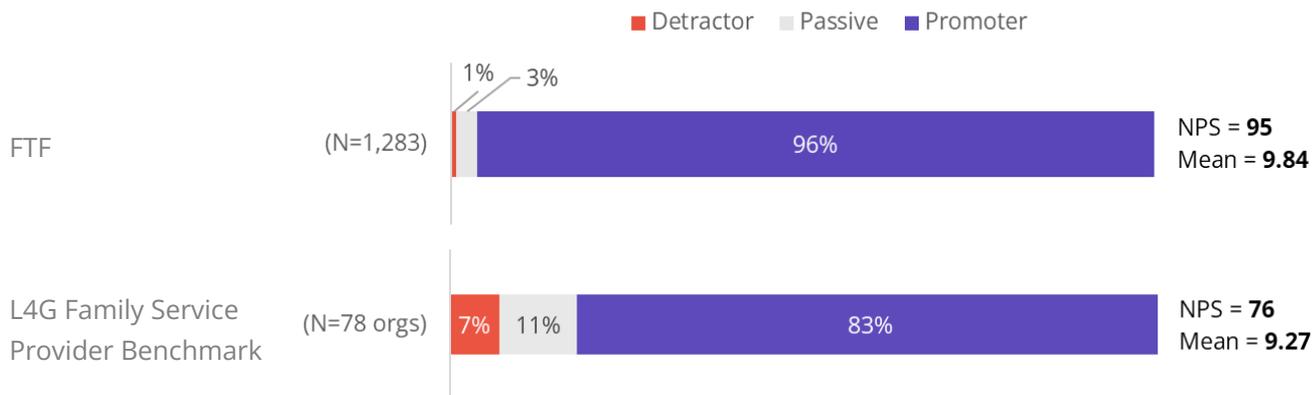
What is the Net Promoter Score® (NPS)?

NPS is a metric used to measure client satisfaction and engagement with services. Scores range from -100 to 100. L4G encourages organizations to use NPS as an organizational thermostat to be monitored over time and across sites, programs, and client demographics. Comparing NPS across these domains allows organizations to identify bright spots or, more importantly, problem areas for further investigation.

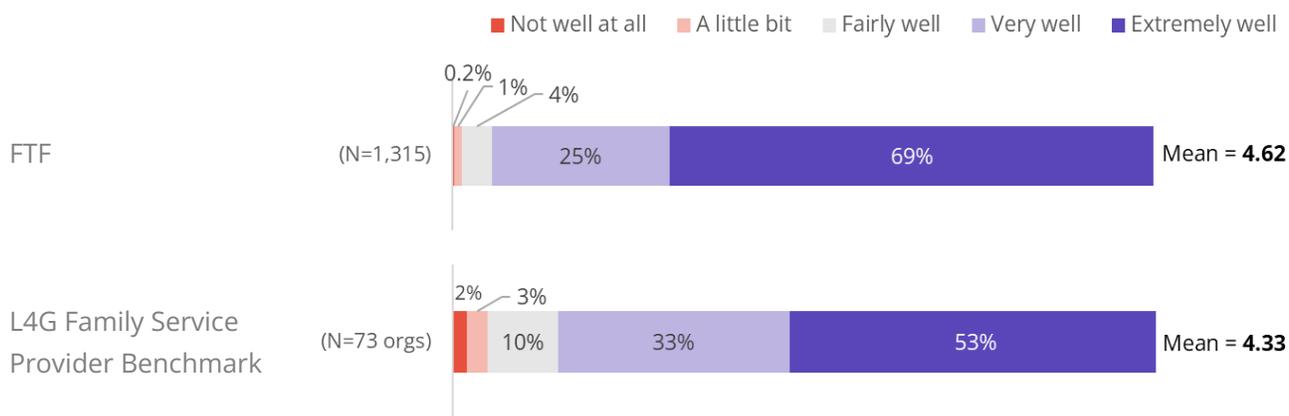
¹ The L4G family service provider benchmark is an average of results across all L4G-participating nonprofit family service providers and represents feedback from more than 12,000 clients.

² Of 1,314 respondents. Note response counts for individual questions may differ as clients can skip select questions.

How likely is it that you would recommend [this FRC] to a friend or family member?
(0=Not at all likely; 10=Extremely likely)



Overall, how well has [this FRC] met your needs?
(1=Not well at all; 5=Extremely well)



Families praise FRCs for their programs and generally want FRCs to expand their offerings and access. When asked about the strengths of FRCs, 56% of respondents said that FRC programming is enjoyable and helps them and their children learn. Nearly one-quarter talked about excellent staff, and over one-fifth highlighted the range of resources that FRCs offer as well as the sense of community and the inclusive environments that FRCs create.

Seventy-nine percent (of 1,313 respondents) visit FRCs regularly (every day, a few times a week, or a few times a month) and 90% of families say FRCs are extremely (62%) or very (28%) easy to access. With regard to programs/classes and resources/referrals:

- Approximately three-quarters of respondents attend programming/classes a few times a week (41%) or a few times a month (34%).
- By contrast, the frequency of receiving resources or referrals is more varied, with half of respondents saying they rarely or never receive a referral or resource.

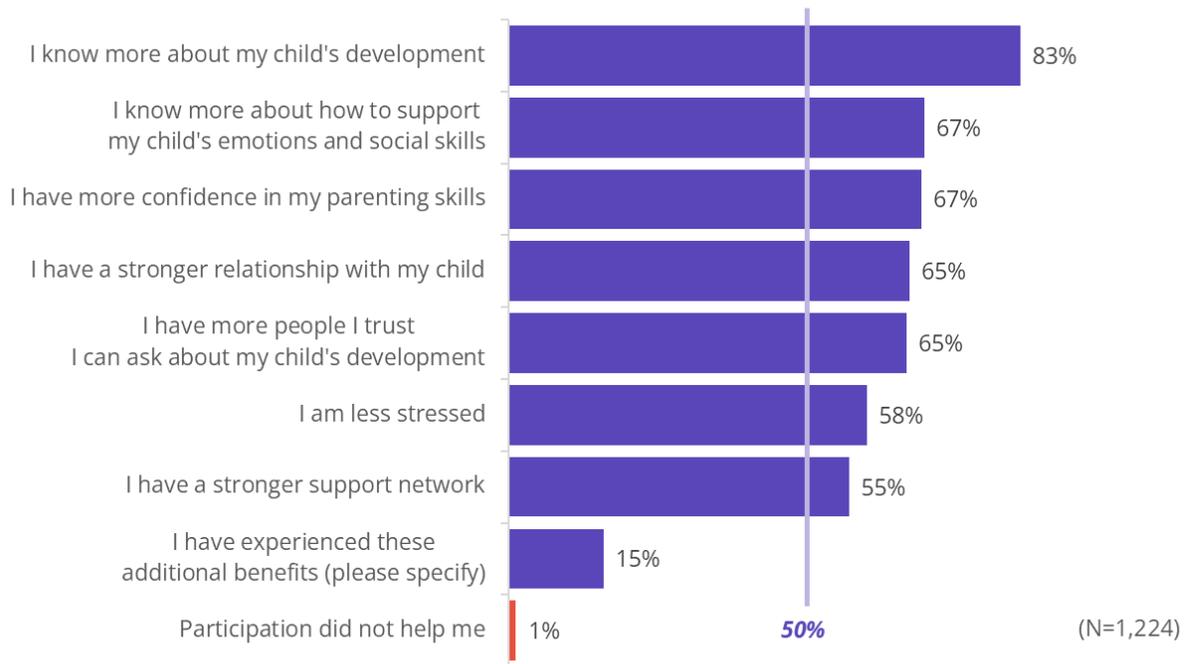
“[FRCs are] Especially helpful for families like ours that unfortunately do not qualify for Head Start but are unable to afford preschool at \$350 a month. Grateful to be able to take my children to all the classes offered here to better prepare them.”

“This program is perfect for young children. The educational content is top-notch, and the staff is warm and welcoming. I’ve met some wonderful families and our kids have made some great friends. It’s a fantastic way to learn and play together. Coming to the Center feels like visiting family.”

Caregivers report positive outcomes for themselves and their children due to participation in FRC programming and receiving resources/referrals.

Overall, almost all families (99%) report that attending FRC programming/classes helped their family to achieve key learning and development outcomes. In particular, over half of families that participated in FRC programming/classes report at least one of the following outcomes:

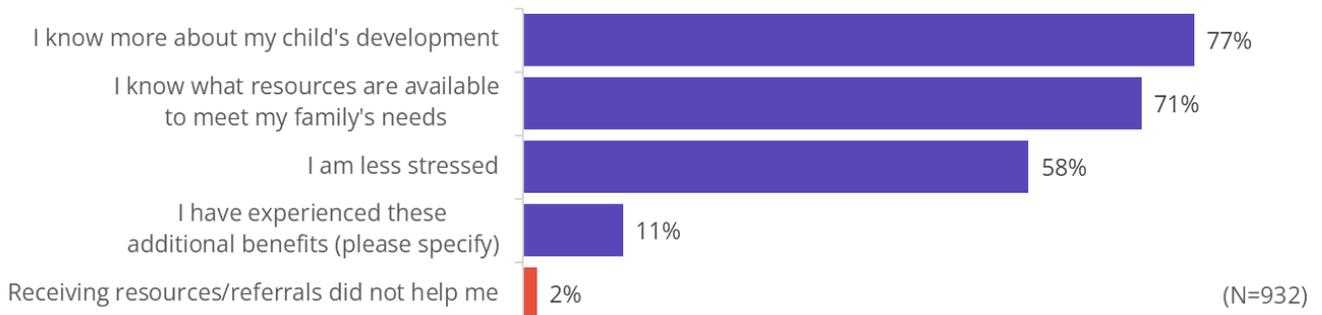
As a result of your participation in this Family Resource Center programming/classes... (Check all that apply)



When asked how FRC programming/classes have specifically helped their children, families report noticing positive changes in their children's social and emotional skills (68% of 1,025 respondents), and language/literacy development (31%), as well as in their behavioral (19%) and cognitive (15%) skills.

FRC's distribution of resources and referrals also leads to positive impacts for families, with nearly all (98%) families who received resources/referrals reporting at least one positive outcome:

As a result of receiving resources/referrals provided by this Family Resource Center (Check all that apply)



Families report positive outcomes whether they use FRC services (programming/classes or resources/referrals) often or rarely. Though, data suggests that families who specifically attend programming/classes more often are more likely to report positive outcomes.

Families are interested in additional support.

When asked to reflect on how FRCs could improve, families talked about wanting FRCs to expand the quantity, length, and variety of class topics. They also want FRCs to expand access to more families; modify schedules for classes/events; adjust signup policies; and improve communications and marketing of offerings.

“Siendo el único centro de este tipo creo que son demasiado poquitos los horarios y días que imparten clases, más actividades, más eventos estaría padre.”
(Being the only center of its kind, I think the schedules and days they offer classes are too few; more activities and more events would be great.)

Families also gave input on how FRCs could improve access to the external services to which families are referred. The most commonly reported ways to improve access to outside FRC-referred services are via: (1) better availability of services; (2) better child care availability; and (3) help with application processes.

Finally, we found differences by client race/ethnicity and additional identity characteristics when we looked at clients' frequency of attendance at FRC programming/classes and frequency of receiving resources/referrals. Due to limitations in the sample and survey questions, as well as the variation in services and operations and local community demographics at each FRC, we were unable to determine the root of these trends. More data collection and interrogation would be required to understand the drivers of the observed differences.

Concluding Thoughts

From the survey data gathered through this project, it is clear that FRCs are valuable to families with young children. They are an easy-to-access place for children to socialize, play, and learn as well as for parents and caregivers to learn and get information and resources to address their family's needs.

The data also reveals that there may be groups of families that could be facing more challenges in accessing early childhood and family services than others, due to family structure, economics (e.g., lack of housing, financial insecurity, employment demands), social/cultural norms, or location.

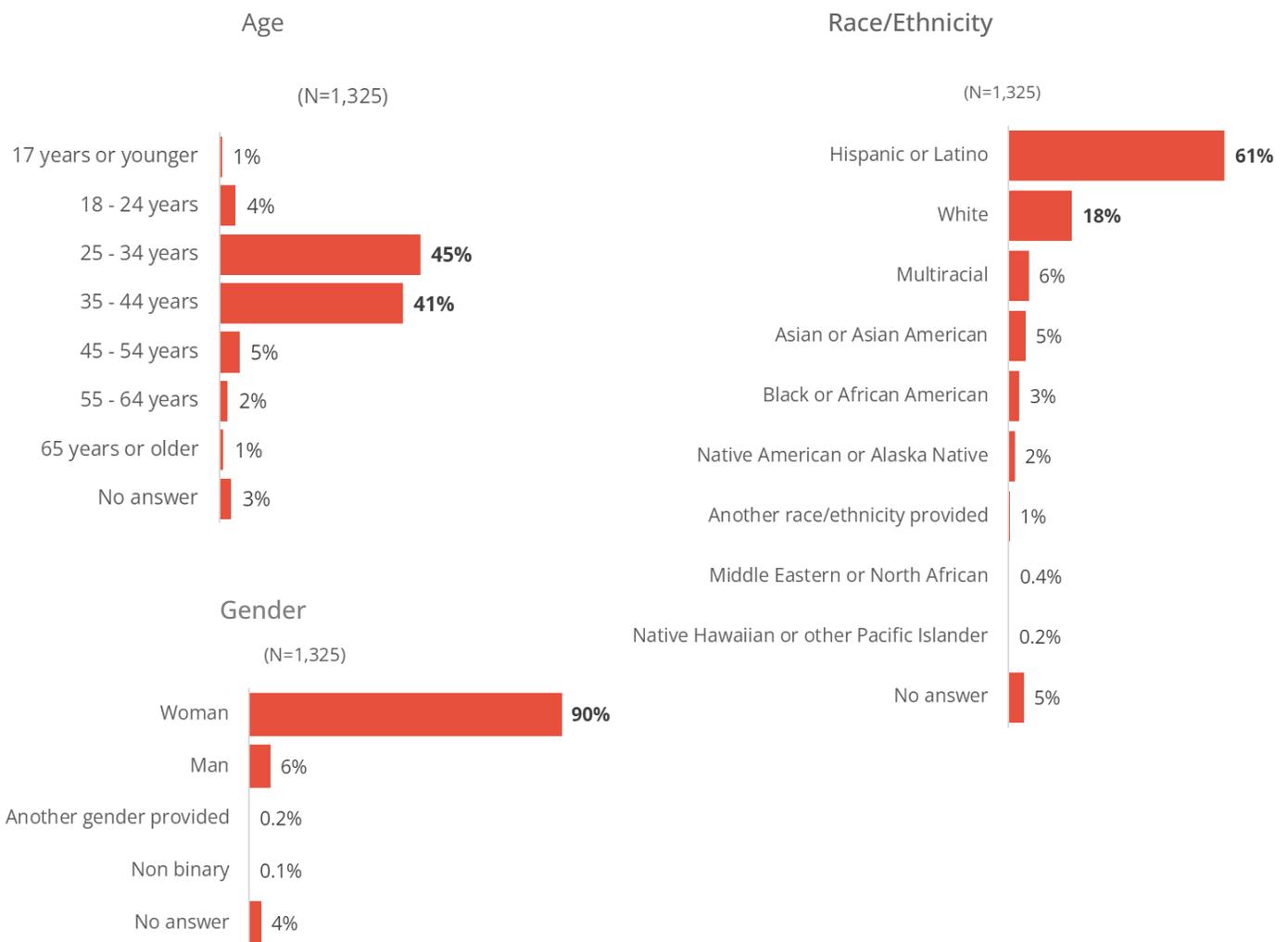
Feedback from families shows overwhelmingly that they want FRCs to offer more, whether that's through expanding capacity to accommodate more families or expanding access. If FRC-focused and system-wide investments were made to ease and increase access to FRCs, and expand the variety of resources and referrals FRCs offer, more families across all demographics and socioeconomic circumstances would benefit.

About This Community Feedback Survey Sample

A total of 1,325 parents and caregivers of children aged 0-5 years old provided feedback between November 2024 and March 2025 for this project. Survey responses were collected by 40 FTF-funded FRCs that are overseen by the 23 FTF grant partners who participated in this project.

FRCs serve a diverse range of clients as they provide a wide range of resources and early supports for families in need with young children. This sample reflects this diversity.

Most survey respondents in this survey sample are women and between the ages of 25 - 44 years old. The majority (61%) identify as Hispanic/Latino; 18% identify as White. Of the 6% who are grouped as Multiracial in this analysis, most indicate Hispanic/Latino as one of their ethnicities. People who identify as Asian, Black, or Native American collectively represent about 10% of the sample.



Sixty percent of respondents also reported additional identity characteristics.³ The most commonly selected characteristics were:

Do any of the following descriptions currently apply to you? (Check all that apply)

(N=1,325)



Data Limitations

Overall, FTF-funded FRCs serve about 20,000 participants per year. Furthermore, some FRC sites serve more families from certain demographic groups than others. This could be due to the types of programs offered at that site, how families are recruited, or the makeup of the local community. Our findings from the data represent the clients who visited an FTF-funded FRC during a specific time period and who chose to respond to the feedback survey. Thus, the results may not be reflective of all communities and should be interpreted within these limitations. The differences we saw by demographics and identity characteristics may be specific to those FRC locations (or may not be representative of the demographic if samples are small) and should not be assumed to apply across all FRCs.

³ Respondents could select among the following answer options: a) Homeless/unsheltered; b) Immigrant/refugee; c) LGBTQ+; d) Low-income/utilizing public assistance; e) Caregiver to a child with a disability; f) Veteran; g) Single parent; h) Unemployed; i) Involved in the child welfare system; j) English is not my primary language; k) Grandparent raising my grandkid(s); or l) Other (please specify).