

# New Hampshire Children’s Trust

## Who We Are and What We Do

The mission of the New Hampshire Children’s Trust (NHCT) is to prevent child abuse and neglect in the state. The most effective strategy proven to prevent such abuse and neglect is to strengthen families, including those at high risk. NHCT provides funding, technical assistance and evaluation services to a range of family resource centers and family support programs that work to strengthen families by connecting parents with services, reducing stress, reducing social isolation, increasing confidence and competence in parenting, and fostering healthy relationships between children and parents. As a statewide agency dedicated to the prevention of child abuse and neglect, the NHCT plays a leading role evaluating the collective and individual impact of family resource centers and family support programs in strengthening families.

### Family Support Outcomes Report 2010

This report summarizes the results and analysis of surveys completed by 862 program participants served by 28 family support programs statewide between July 1, 2009 and June 30, 2010. The survey instrument is a retrospective tool designed to collect demographic data and to assess the change in eight protective factors that help to strengthen families and reduce the likelihood of child abuse and neglect occurring. These protective factors include: Supportive Relationships, Knowing Who to Contact, Parenting Confidence, Social Supports, Meeting Family Needs, Family Advocacy, Reducing Family Stress, and Nurturing and Attachment between parent and child.

#### ***Who Typically Uses the Services of Family Resource Centers and Family Support Programs?***

Although most family support programs are open to everyone in their communities, they also serve a disproportionate share of populations with risk factors. As shown in the table below, the percentages of families accessing family support programs who are low or very low income, single, less well educated and less stable with respect to housing are significantly higher than these populations in the state as a whole.

Characteristics of Survey Participants	Family Support Survey Participants 2009-2010	Compared to New Hampshire (2009 stats)*
<b>Family Income</b>	\$25,000	\$73,856
<b>% Family Income less than \$30,000</b>	58%	12.6%
<b>% Family Income less than \$10,000</b>	29%	2.3%
<b>% Single Parents</b>	25%	12.1%
<b>% White, Non-Hispanic</b>	82%	93.2%
<b>% Owning their Home</b>	35%	73%
<b>% with less than high school education</b>	17%	9.6%

\* US Census Bureau, 2009 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

The full report is available from the NH Children’s Trust Fund at [www.nhctf.org](http://www.nhctf.org). Funding for technical assistance and evaluation of family support programs provided by NH DHHS, Division for Children, Youth and Families.

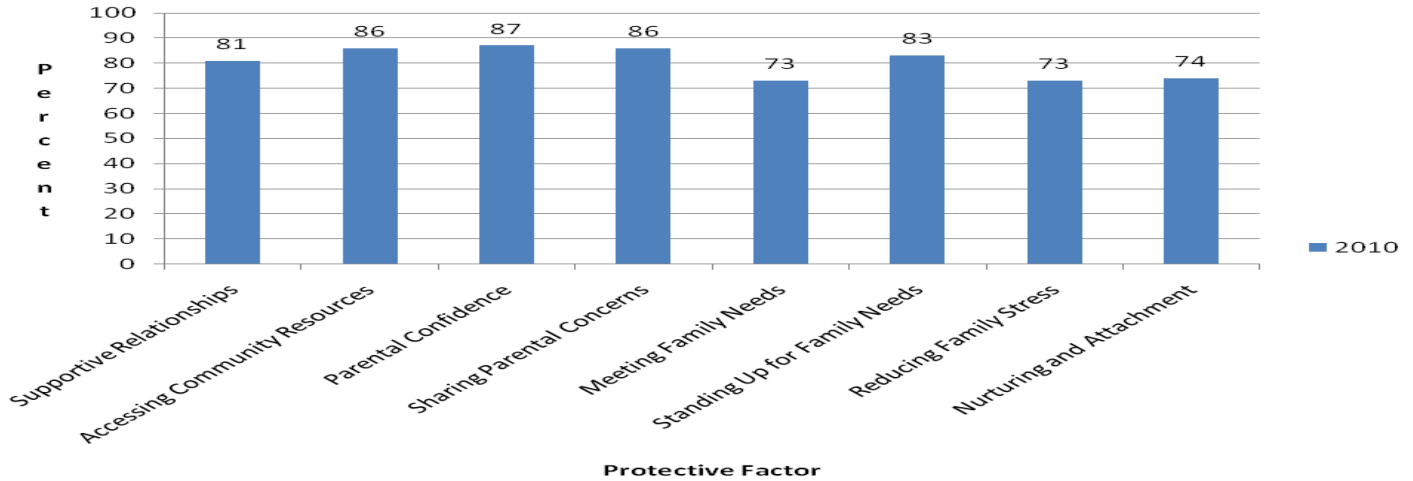
## Participants Less Likely to Own Their Homes or Have Stable Housing

Statistics from the U.S. Census Bureau (2009, ACS) report a homeownership rate of 73% for the state of NH, yet only 35% of survey respondents indicated that they own their home. More than half are renters, and one in ten respondents now share housing with friends or relatives. The parents and children in these families may be subject to the stress of frequent moves, overcrowded conditions and instability.

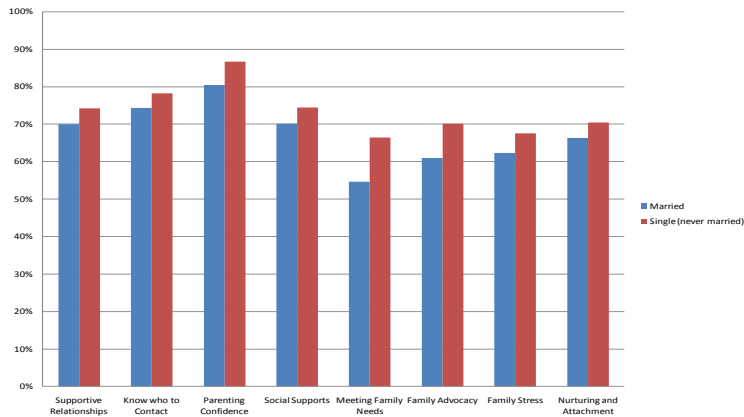
## Parents with the Least Confidence and Competence Show Substantial Improvements as a Result of Program Involvement

Of the people who self-assessed their competence and confidence in protective factors at low ratings at program entry, between 73% and 87% of them subsequently assessed themselves at high ratings after program involvement.

Percent of Respondents Who Self-Assessed at Low Ratings and Moved to High Ratings as a Result of Program Involvement



Comparison of Married versus Single Parents; Percent Improved on Protective Factors



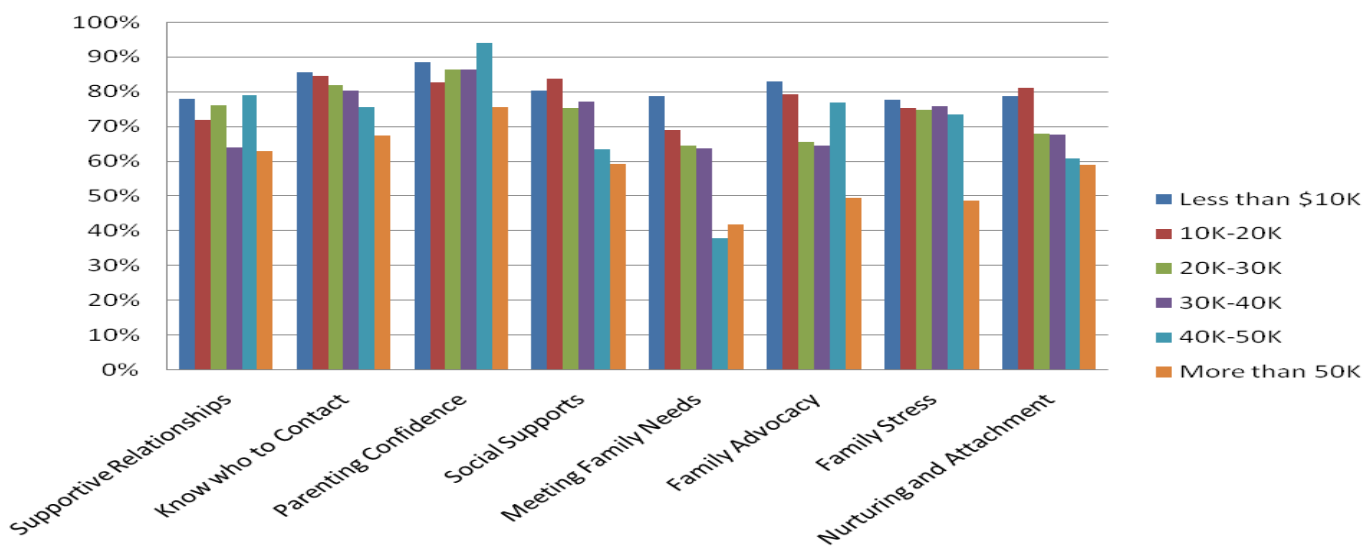
## All Parents Benefit from Programs, But Single Parents Benefit More

A greater percentage of single parents than married respondents benefited from services in building every protective factor, particularly in Meeting Family Needs and in Family Advocacy. Single parent families are an important population to reach; in NH 45% of single parent, female-headed households with children under the age of five live in poverty.

## **All Parents Benefit, But Low Income Parents Generally Benefit More**

Respondents in the two lowest income brackets realized the greatest percent improvement for most protective factors. Between 75% and 95% of respondents in the lowest income bracket – those with incomes of less than \$10K - reported improvements in every protective factor. By contrast, between 42% and 75% of respondents with incomes of \$50K or more showed improvement. Thus, while highest income families still benefited from the programs, on nearly every question a lower percentage of them improved. As might be expected, the greatest disparity in percent improvement between high and low income levels occurred in Meeting Family Needs, presumably because the necessity of meeting family needs is much greater for very low income parents.

### **Percent Improvement by Income Level for All Questions**



## **The Importance of Family Resource Centers**

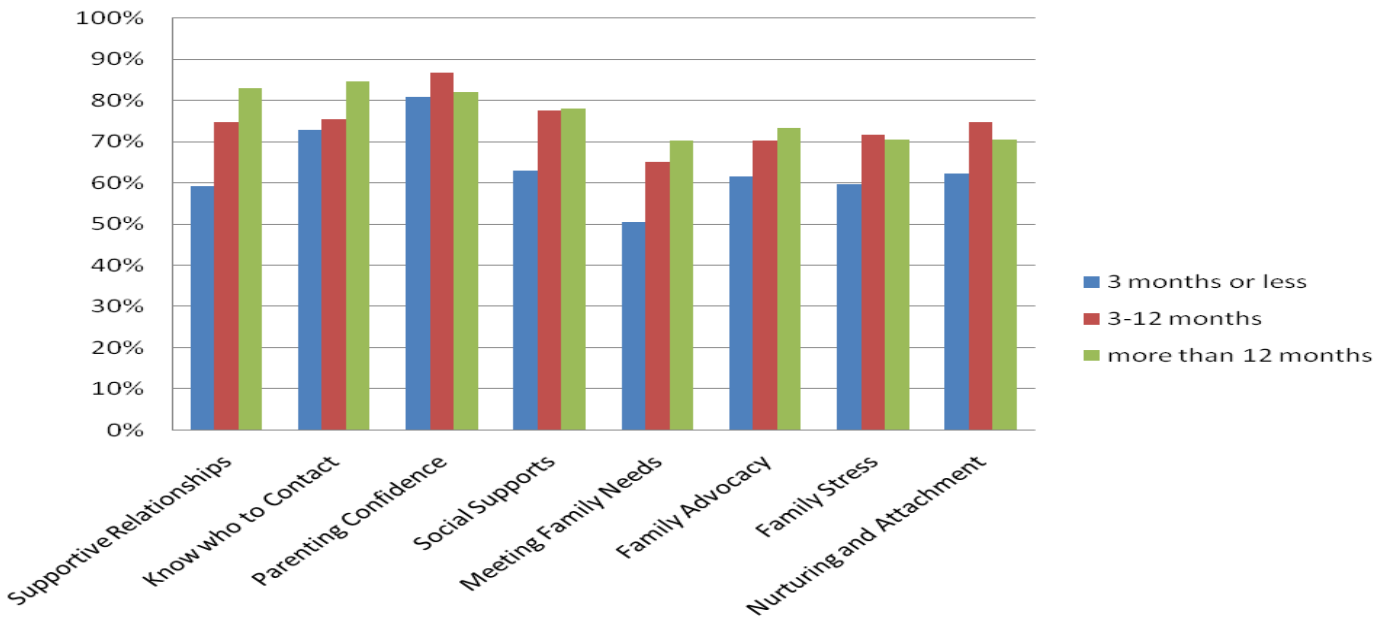
The past few decades have brought profound changes in the conditions under which families are trying to raise children. The traditional family structure of husband as breadwinner with a stay-at-home wife has declined sharply. Changes in family structure combined with workforce and labor trends have often meant increased stress on families, more work with less pay and a rise in the working poor. In the current recession, funding and subsidies for education, childcare, housing and social services have been reduced, putting additional stress on vulnerable families. While many families are widely dispersed so that traditional support systems of grandparents and extended family are no longer available, others are finding it necessary to move back in with parents. Unemployed fathers are more likely than ever before to fill the role of childcare provider, and the number of grandparents raising their grandchildren is steadily increasing.

Family resource centers provide supports and services to the full range of children and families in their communities. Parents and caregivers may access services not only in times of need, but also as a regular part of day-to-day life. Building strong families builds strong communities, and communities that support children and families are better prepared to meet the social, educational and economic challenges of the future.

***Greatest Gains Generally Occur  
Between Three Months and One Year of Program Involvement***

A broad analysis of length of program involvement suggests that for many participants the maximum effect of involvement in a program occurs between three months and up to one year. While initial benefits are evident with service durations of three months or less, the growth in improvement continues up to one year before leveling off or declining in some areas. Some families with multiple risk factors or under extraordinary stress may benefit from longer involvement.

**Percent Improvement by Length of Participation**



***Family Support Survey Findings and Implications for the Future***

- The vast majority of participating families benefit from the services of family resource centers and family support programs.
- Families with risk factors for child abuse and neglect benefit the most.
- Vulnerable families and their children are further destabilized when essential supports and services are cut, especially in economic downturns.

***Many thanks to the agencies that participated in survey administration and the collection of data for this report, including the following:*** Child and Family Services; The Children’s Place and Parent Education Center; Community Child Care of Portsmouth; Community Health and Hospice; Concord Heights Neighborhood Family Center; Good Beginnings of Sullivan County; Nashua Adult Learning Center; Families First Health and Support Center; Family Connections Center; Family Resource Center of Central NH; Family Resource Center of Gorham/Berlin; The River Center; Good Beginnings of the Upper Valley; The Grapevine and Community Resource Center; HUB Family Resource Center; Manchester Family Education Collaborative; Monadnock Family Resource Center; Monadnock Region Child Advocacy Center; NH Minority Health Coalition; Riverbend Parent Child Centers; Rochester Child Care Center; The Upper Room Family Resource Center; VNA Community Services, Parent-Baby Adventures; Whole Village Family Resource Center; The Youth Council

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