

Family Resource Center

Background:

Family Resource Centers were first established as part of a nationwide movement in the 1980s to strengthen families and communities by addressing the need for family support and child abuse prevention. These centers are needed because the past few decades have brought profound changes in the conditions under which families are trying to raise children and care for other family members. Changes in the socio-economic, labor and employment markets along with changing social services environments have forced many families to move away from traditional support systems of grandparents and other relatives. Federal, state and local government have cut back on the funding of subsidies for education, childcare, housing and social services.

There is a growing body of research that indicates that providing support and resources for children and families has a positive impact on the quality of life in communities. Communities with a strong social network have families and children who are better prepared to meet the social, educational and economic challenges of the future. Nationally, Family Resource Centers have taken on many forms depending on the community each serves.

Definition:

A Family Resource Center is a non-profit, community-based setting available and accessible to all families in that community. The center has services and programs that are designed to meet the needs of the community it serves. Individuals may access services not only in times of need, but as a regular part of day-to-day life.

Family Resource Centers offer a welcoming atmosphere for family-oriented programs, resources, activities and classes to strengthen families and promote positive parenting. Families work in collaboration with staff and volunteers to create positive social change and build supportive community networks.

Family Resource Centers provide to individuals, families and children a range of support services that promote family health and well-being through support and education. Individuals and families are encouraged to build upon their unique strengths and skills to reach their highest potential. Family support and prevention services are provided to all families, typically through collaborative efforts with other social services agencies and local public and private organizations.

Family Resource Centers have, as their core programs, services that are designed to build on the strength of families with young children and individuals, as well as promote the health and well being of children, families and the communities in which they live.

Family Resource Centers are focused on primary prevention services.

These services include:

- Parenting Support and Education programs for parents and caregivers

- Playgroups and opportunities for social interaction for young children, parents and caregivers
- Early Childhood Development Education
- Programs that support youths, caretakers and their families

Other services may include:

- Home Visiting
- Medical and Health Education
- School Readiness
- Literacy Education and Support
- Financial Literacy and Information
- Family Mentoring and Advocacy
- Life Skills Training/Employment counseling
- Short-term Child Placement/Respite Care
- Information and Referral Services
- Afterschool programs
- Support for pregnant women
- Targeted support for pregnant and parenting teens, single parents, grandparents, foster and adoptive parents, and fathers
- Mediation
- Diversion

Services offered by Family Resource Centers are ongoing, evidence and outcome-based, effective, and measurable through participants' voluntary engagement in program evaluation.

Family Resource Centers are centers that have satisfactorily completed the peer review process, that are certified, and that have completed the credentialing process as determined by the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services, in collaboration with Family Support New Hampshire.