The New York State Family Resource Center Network is comprised of family resource centers, located throughout New York State, responding to the needs of their local communities.

...strengthening New York’s families

For more information, contact: Judy Richards at 518-474-9613
Guidelines for
New York State
Family Resource Centers

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What are Family Resource Centers?

Family Resource Centers are easily accessible, strength-based programs that support families in communities across New York State. Family Resource Centers (FRCs) are flexible, family-focused, and culturally sensitive. Services and programs are based on local needs, building on existing planning processes with community and interdisciplinary participation.

The Centers work in partnership with other community agencies and parents. FRC programs assist families in their caregiving roles, strengthen informal support among families, offer needed resources either directly or through community referrals and promote community investment. Services build on protective factors that research shows can reduce child abuse and maltreatment. These factors include parental resiliency, social connections, knowledge of parenting and child development, concrete support in time of need, and social and emotional competence in children.

Who is served at FRCs?

❖ All families are welcome. The diversity of families participating in FRCs strengthens opportunities for caregivers to learn from each other and reduces the stigma sometimes sensed in service organizations.
❖ Services are open to families with children of any age with an emphasis on high need families with children ages 0-5.
❖ High need families are those who need extra help due to isolation, lack sufficient personal, social or community supports or who can benefit from support related to their family situation. Examples include: teen and single parents, families without sufficient employment/income, grandparents as parents, caregivers with mental health issues, families with children who have developmental needs or disabilities, and families that have come together through adoption or foster care.
Where should FRCs be located?

- The location of services should be based on a community assessment to determine the location of the most high-need populations and where there is a lack of similar services.
- Due to resource limitations, services may be targeted to specific high need areas, as opposed to the entire county for example.
- Consideration should be given to the accessibility of the site. This includes both transportation and handicap accessibility.
- The center should be in a highly visible location.
- Satellite sites, program events and home visits can be used to reach more isolated, hard-to-engage families.

What do FRCs look like?

- Signage reflects a welcoming, child and family centered program.
- Space for adults is arranged so they can see and interact with their children.
- Play area allows for large motor activities, small group activities and reading area developmentally appropriate for pre-school age children.
- Adult-size furniture for informal conversation with space large enough to conduct parenting workshops.
- Inviting outdoor space for parent and child interaction and social events if possible.
- Area set aside for brochures, resources, books, videos and other materials for parents to view and select.
- Kitchen is available for preparing snacks and potluck meals for workshops and parenting programs.
- Office space is available for private conversations, administrative duties, and data entry.
- Décor reflects diverse cultures.

For more information about Family Resource Centers in New York State

Contact Judy Richards, at the New York State Office of Children and Family Services (518) 474-9613 or at info@ocfs.state.ny.us.

Members of the Family Resource Center Network

Through the Family Resource Center Network, FRCs from across New York strengthen families by working together to share ideas and collaborate on initiatives. Members of the FRC Network include:

**Broome County**

**Mothers & Babies Perinatal Network of South Central New York**
Sharon Chesna, Executive Director
Linda Ruffo, Director of Family Resource Centers
- Parents As Leaders (PAL) Family Resource Center
  457 State Street
  Binghamton, NY 13901
  607-771-6334
- Sadie Purdy, Coordinator
- Mary Kelly, Coordinator
- Endicott Family Resource Center
  St. Paul’s Episcopal Church
  200 Jefferson Avenue
  Endicott, NY 13760
  607-785-4331
- Deborah Zapotocky, Coordinator

**Clinton, Essex, and Franklin Counties**

**Child Care Coordinating Council of the North Country**
Jamie Basiliere, Executive Director
- Family Connections
  PO Box 2640
  Plattsburgh, NY 12901
  518-561-4999, 800-540-2273
  Juliette Lynch, Coordinator

**Cortland County**

**Cornell Cooperative Extension of Cortland County**
60 Central Avenue
Cortland, NY 13045
607-753-5077
- Family Matters
  Holy Ghost Elementary School
  40 Marion Street
  Tupper Lake, NY 12986
  518-359-8167, 800-540-2273
  Cindy Powers, Coordinator
- Families First, Inc.
  Box 565
  Elizabethtown, NY 12932
  800-894-7504, 518-873-9544
  Robin Nelson, Coordinator
- Families R Us Resource Center
  24 Fourth Street
  Malone, NY 12953
  518-481-7281
  Diana Grant, Coordinator
What services do FRCs provide?

All programs provide services, minimally 25 hours a week, including:

- Structured, curriculum-based, parenting education.
- Informal parenting education and support such as family support and child development activities.
- Caregiver-child interaction activities like drop-in playgroups and family outings.
- Information and referral, including sharing resource materials.
- Health related programs.
- Parent leadership development and peer support.

Additional strength based services and resources are provided based on the unique needs of the community. Services are offered by staff of the FRC and/or through other service providers. Optional services include, but are not limited to:

- Early childhood education.
- Early intervention services.
- Supervised visitation.
- Respite care.
- Family enrichment programs such as life skills, adult education and job readiness.
- Basic needs/resources like a food pantry or lending library.

In the context of child, family and community characteristics, culture and preferences, FRCs embrace the trend toward use of evidence-based and evidence-informed programs and practices, leading to measurable results for families.

Flexibly schedule to work outside normal business hours.

- Passes background checks with any fees paid by agency.
- Health history approved (due to contact with children).

Culturally competent. As defined by the Child Welfare League of America, cultural competence is the ability of individuals and systems to respond respectfully and effectively to people of all cultures, classes, races, ethnic backgrounds, sexual orientations, and faith or religions in a manner that recognizes, affirms and values the worth of individuals, families, tribes, and communities, and protects and preserves the dignity of each.
What are some creative outreach approaches used by FRCs?

- Outreach activities are targeted to places where hard to reach families are typically located.
- Location and hours are established based on needs of the target population. Evening hours are important in light of working families.
- Linkages with providers typically serving the target population for referral purposes (i.e. mental health providers, domestic violence programs, social services districts, substance abuse programs).
- Offer services and resources that support high need populations (i.e. early childhood activities, fatherhood programs, GED programs).
- Provide transportation (particularly in rural areas), pending resources.
- Staff should be representative of culture/ethnicity/language of the community served.
- Provide or link with home visiting services which are more accessible for isolated families.
- Consider satellite sites in underserved areas to outstation needed services and/or host events.
- Hire an outreach coordinator to focus on reaching high need families.
- Provide tangible support to encourage participation from the hardest to reach families, such as meals, child care, clothing closets, etc.

What staffing levels and qualifications are recommended for FRCs?

Optimal staffing patterns, pending resources:

- 1 Program Coordinator for marketing, community assessments, outreach/linkages with other providers, community building, etc.
- 1 full-time staff member to focus on child development activities.
- 1 full-time staff member to focus on parenting activities.
- Volunteers/parent leaders to assist with outreach/engagement.
- Outreach coordinator.
- Data collection staff.

Optimal staffing qualifications, pending resources:

- Staff working with children should have a Child Development Associate (CDA) either when hired or begin to earn it within one year. Hiring agency provides resources to staff members working on their CDA.
- Staff working with parents should have a Family Development Credential (FDC) either when hired or begin to earn it within one year. Hiring agency provides resources to staff members working on their FDC.
- Staff may need additional certificates depending on model of parenting education provided.
- Bachelors degree preferred or 3 years of experience in early childhood and/or family systems background.
- Representative of language/ethnicity of community served.