



# WHOLE FAMILY APPROACH EVALUATION IN SOUTHERN NEW JERSEY

Since 2013, the Pascale Sykes Foundation has implemented the Whole Family Approach in 14 different collaborative nonprofit organizations across southern New Jersey. The Whole Family Approach focuses on supporting families with two dependable adult caregivers through individualized goal setting, organizational collaboration, and consistent personal supports to families.

The Senator Walter Rand Institute for Public Affairs (WRI) has evaluated outcomes and processes related to the Whole Family Approach since its inception through a quasi-experimental, mixed-methods evaluation. WRI's outcomes evaluation implements validated social science scales to measure changes in three major outcome areas across families: 1) **child well-being**, 2) **healthy relationships**, and 3) **financial well-being**. The process evaluation assesses changes in service provision and organizational partnership among the collaboratives implementing the Whole Family Approach.



Senator Walter Rand Institute  
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## PREPARED BY

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## *Evaluation of the* **OUTCOMES**

To determine how the Whole Family Approach impacts families, WRI analysis compares families in two groups. **Target families** are two-caregiver households who have received or continue to receive services from a collaborative implementing the Whole Family Approach, while **matching families** are two-caregiver households in the same geographic areas as target families who are not being served by a collaborative implementing the Whole Family Approach. WRI surveys the two adults in families at baseline, and at 6-, 12-, 18-, and 24-months to gain a deeper understanding of how self-reported scale scores related to child well-being, healthy relationships, and financial well-being change over time. Results indicate diverse adult caregiver relationships; thus, to account for this variation across caregivers, survey data from the two adults in each family is analyzed separately as Adult 1 and Adult 2.

*WRI's most recent analysis indicate several notable results:*

### **Help Given and Received**

The Help Given and Received scale measures adult caregivers' self-reported sense of reciprocity in family responsibilities. In target families, Adult 1 scores significantly improved over time, and were significantly higher than matching families' scores throughout the intervention, while Adult 2's scores also significantly improved over time. The results indicate an increase in family duties shared between caregivers related to Whole Family Approach methods.

### **Child Educational Aspirations**

The Child Educational Aspirations scale measures adult caregivers' perceptions of their child's educational aspirations. In target families, Adult 1's educational aspiration scale scores increased significantly throughout the evaluation. The results illustrate a positive impact on educational goals influenced through potential aspects of the Whole Family Approach.

### **Financial Challenges**

The Financial Challenges scale measures adult caregivers' self-reported financial stressors experienced throughout the evaluation. In target families, Adult 2 scores reported significantly fewer financial stressors over time compared to Adult 2 in matching families. The results highlight the potential role of the Whole Family Approach in reduction of financial stressors.

## *Evaluation of the*

# PROCESS

Since 2018, WRI has evaluated specific collaborative processes through both direct observations of collaboratives' monthly planning meetings and focus groups with collaborative staff members. WRI analyzed the data to identify common themes across and within collaboratives implementing the Whole Family Approach.

Through this analysis, WRI identified several cogent themes across all collaboratives:

- **Internal Processes:** Collaboratives seek to reflect the diversity and culture of their communities, actively use data, and plan for the future.
- **Education:** Collaborative programming includes college preparatory programs, youth educational opportunities, English as a Second Language classes, financial literacy education, and mental health supports.
- **Community Development:** Collaboratives emphasize trust building between themselves and the community and develop relationships to support current systems and enhance community capacity.
- **Family:** Strengthening family ties is critical to collaboratives' work. They accomplish this through individual goal-setting and involvement in community activities.
- **English as a Second Language:** Collaboratives support English Language Learners through classes, workshops, public institutional navigation, and culturally responsive events.

# 477

*families surveyed*

# 2,773

*total surveys completed*

# 14

*collaboratives engaged*

# 67% WOMEN

# 33% MEN

*survey sample*

*Adult 1 ~*

*88% women, 12% men*

*Adult 2 ~*

*43% women, 57% men*

## *Highlights & Ongoing*

# EVALUATION



WHOLE FAMILY  
APPROACH

### **Adaptability**

Collaborative nonprofit agencies implementing the Whole Family Approach apply its strategy across a variety of contexts. Collaboratives serve a diverse set of families, including immigrant families, foster youth and their families, families living in poverty, families with unrelated caregivers committed to engagement in a child's life, and families who aim to help their children thrive. WRI's evaluation illustrates how the Whole Family Approach integrates the flexibility necessary to be successfully implemented across organizations with numerous goals in a variety of contexts.

### **Ongoing Evaluation**

WRI will continue to engage in inter-collaborative outcomes and process evaluation. In addition, WRI has committed to identify changes overtime in outcomes and process within individual collaboratives operating with specific goals and in various, and often dissimilar, contexts. Future evaluation will focus on educational framework programming, the cultural responsiveness of the approach for immigrant families, and effective goalsetting and supports in individual and group settings. WRI will continue the Whole Family Approach evaluation through June 2022.

**Senator Walter Rand Institute for Public Affairs (WRI)** is an applied research and public service center at Rutgers University-Camden working to address issues impacting Southern New Jersey. With nearly two decades of experience in evaluation, public policy, and organizational development, WRI has helped organizations in the public, private, and nonprofit sectors develop partnerships and achieve optimal effectiveness. WRI aims to contribute knowledge for sound policy and practice in Southern NJ through research, community engagement, and coalition building.

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