



United Families

Study overview of the United Families program evaluation.

Jeffery A. Anderson, Ph.D.

Allison A. Howland, Ph.D.

SUMMARY

Since 2010, United Families (UF), sponsored by One Community One Family (OCOF), has been dedicated to empowering families to address the challenges of parenting/care giving through education, support, and advocacy.

Overview of Program Services

- UF offers monthly parent gatherings open to ALL families with multiple meeting locations across Dearborn, Decatur, Franklin, Jennings, Ohio, Ripley, Rush, and Switzerland counties in Southeastern Indiana. These gatherings provide supportive interaction with other families and parent development topics related to child-rearing and education.
- The parents leading UF are trained as Family Support Specialists and provide one-to-one peer supports for families enrolled in wraparound. These supports include supportive counseling, skill building, and case management to assist families in system navigation of multiple agencies serving youth and families. Additionally Family Support Specialists provide specific assistance with the development of individual youth education, behavior, and accommodation (504) plans, as well as crisis support when requested by families.
- United Families staff also engages in social marketing activities and presentations to community groups about the importance of including parents and caregivers in service development and provision for youth and families.

Evaluation

The United Families evaluation is part of the broader One Community One Family local evaluation, following all professional and ethical regulations regarding confidentiality. This study collects qualitative and quantitative data from three primary sources.

- UF program data including attendance at gatherings and 1-to-1 contacts
- Parent/Caregiver Survey designed to measure parent satisfaction and perceived impact of UF services, as well as parent engagement in local schools
- Interviews with program staff, community stakeholders, and parents/caregivers to inform program improvement and expansion



Table 1. Participation in Parent Gatherings by Location (6/2010-3/2011)

	Total Attendance		Average Attendance	
	Count	%	Count	%
Aurora	113	30	8	28
Batesville	147	39	7	24
Brookville	9	2	2	7
Greensburg	67	18	5	17
Lawrenceburg	36	10	6	21
North Vernon	4	1	1	3

Table 2. 1-to-1 Family Peer Support Contacts (12/2010-3/2011)

Type of Service	Family Contacts		Time in Minutes	
	Count	%	Count	%
Supportive Counseling	29	66	1771	55
Case management	9	20	850	26
Skill building	6	14	628	19
Type of Contact				
Face-to-Face w/Client	30	73	4055	87
Phone to Client	5	12	308	7
Face-to-Face w/providers	2	5	240	5
Phone to Other providers	4	10	35	1

Focus groups with parents representing family participants across the eight counties currently served by United Families have just concluded. The research team is currently analyzing this data for themes related to parent perceptions of service provision and suggestions for program improvement and expansion, however, here are some parent/caregiver quotes describing their experiences with United Families.

After some (initial) services ended, we were kind of put out there, forgotten, and on our own. We get a lot of moral support, if nothing else (from United Families). We didn't feel like we were abandoned out there....

(Family Support Specialist) has put me and my son back on track. She gets the group all together to what we need to do with him and what we don't need to do with him....she comes to IEP meetings with me. She's been a big help.

When I'm wore out and I'm tired...I can call (Family Support Specialist) because some things are not going right and she's always right there.

There's always challenges....but right now there are no real big ones...but we also know when there is a big one, with United Families, we're gonna have back-up.