

Measuring What Matters: Tracking Whole Family Outcomes in Community Action

NCAP Annual Convention
August 27, 2025



The Promise Of Community Action

Community Action changes people's lives, embodies the spirit of hope, improves communities, and makes America a better place to live. We care about the entire community, and we are dedicated to helping people help themselves and each other.



Agenda

- Guided by what matters—our purpose
- The need to balance purpose and practice
- Measuring child, parent, and family outcomes
- Resources, Tools, & Learning Opportunities
- Q & A



Presenters



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Objectives

- Identify the need to balance social and economic mobility goals and person-centered practices of WFA and other factors to consider when selecting measures.
- Highlight approaches and considerations for measuring child, parent, and family outcomes across specific domains.
- Identify actionable strategies and resources for attendees to call on at home.



Who are we measuring for?

Clarity of Purpose

What

Every organization on the planet knows WHAT they do. These are products they sell or the services.

How

Some organizations know HOW they do it. These are the things that make them special or set them apart from their competition.

Why

Very few organizations know WHY they do what they do. WHY is not about making money. That's a result. WHY is a purpose, cause or belief. It's the very reason your organization exists.

The Golden Circle



Social & Economic Mobility: Our Why

Our Why:

- Breaking the cycle of poverty from one generation to the next
- Creating a legacy of well-being from one generation to the next



SEM Predictors and Drivers

Social and Economic Mobility Domains	Components/Predictors/Drivers/Outcomes (Informed by various SEM frameworks and evidence)
Quality Employment	Meaningful work; Family supporting/living wage; Steady employment
Financial Well-Being	Income (HH income levels); Financial security (savings, debt)
Education and Lifelong Learning	Quality Preschool; Child cognitive and social development (child reading at or above grade level by 3 rd grade; success in middle school math); Executive functioning skills; High School graduation; Postsecondary education/training (degree or credential); Educational enrichment
Safe, Stable, Affordable Housing	Affordability (monthly housing cost below 30% of HH income); Stability (moves); Affordable and safe water and utilities
Health and Well-Being	Physical and mental health; Access and utilization of health and behavioral services; Family structure and stability; Safety (exposure to trauma, crime); Nutritious food; Self-Efficacy; Growth mindset; Agency (sense of being in control of one's actions and having the ability to accomplish one's goals)
Belonging and Civic Muscle	Belongingness (Individual sense of belonging); Social Capital (bridging and bonding social capital, social connections); Power (political participation),
Thriving Communities and Neighborhoods	Racial and socioeconomic integration; Supportive and livable communities and neighborhoods (neighborhood quality); Justice and protection/freedom from harmful environments and contaminants, crime, over-policing, mass incarceration; Community development (economic activity, built environment); Social networks; Accessible transportation/systems; Quality education systems; Parks and green space

^[1] Results for America, <https://catalog.results4america.org/>, Urban Institute, Boosting Upward Mobility, <https://www.urban.org/research/publication/boosting-upward-mobility-metrics-inform-local-action> and Measuring Mobility from Poverty, <https://www.mobilitypartnership.org/publications/measuring-mobility-poverty>, Institute for Research on Poverty, Quarterly Leadership Memo, April 2020, Economic Mobility Memos 1-3: <https://aspe.hhs.gov/2020-annual-poverty-research-policy-forum-measuring-economic-mobility-quarterly-leadership-memo>

The What and the How of WFA

Before we dive in on WFA measures let's make sure we have a shared understanding of WFA.



Whole Family Approach

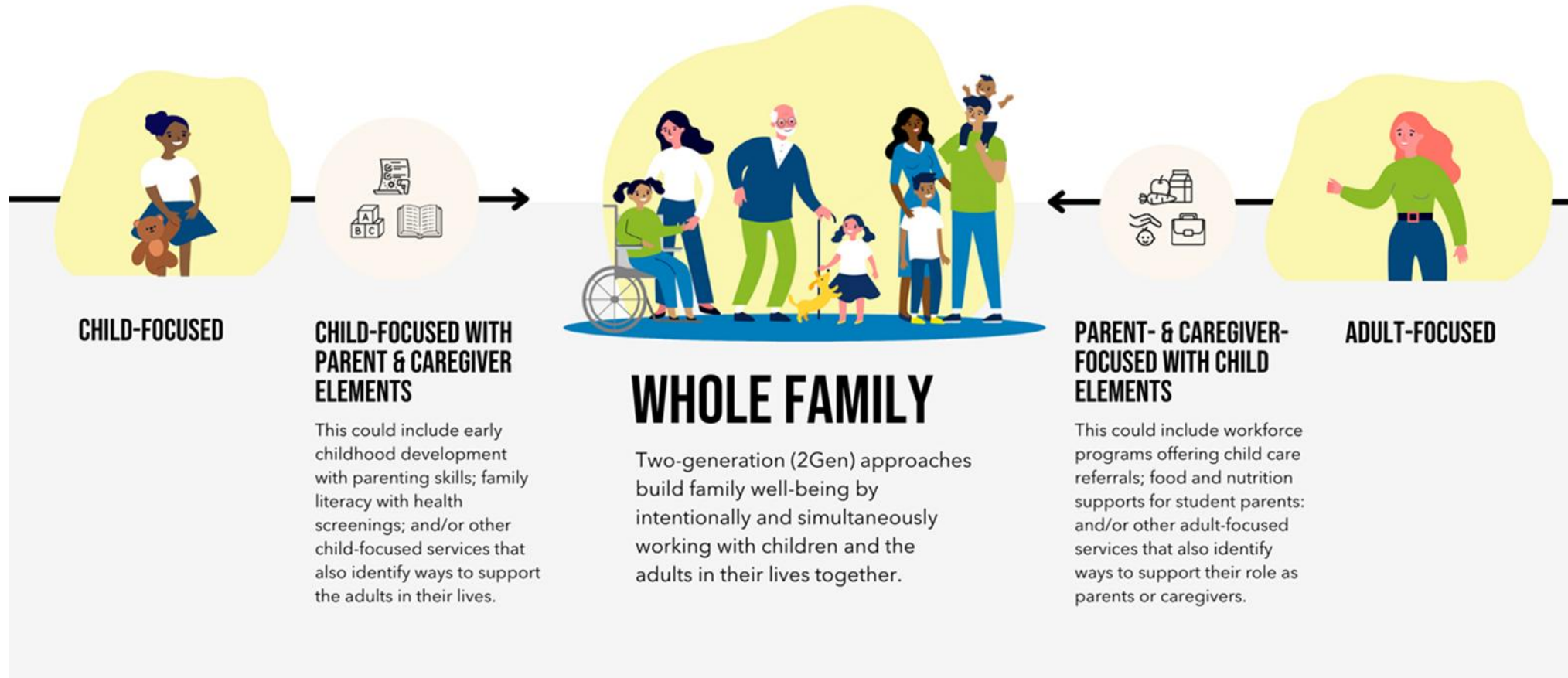
- Parents' education and income are linked with children's educational achievement
- Educational disadvantages compound over generations and they are more pronounced in the U.S. than in most advanced industrial countries

Whole Family Approach

- Family Investment Theory suggests that as parents improve their education and get better jobs with higher earnings, they will have more financial resources to invest in their children
- With increased incomes families will purchase more opportunities that benefit children and youth
- Additional income may also reduce stress at home and enhance parent psychological well-being and optimism, all associated with improved family functioning

A Two-Generation Human Capital Approach to Anti-Poverty, 2018 Russell Sage Foundation Journal

TWO-GENERATION (#2GEN) APPROACHES CENTER WHOLE FAMILIES



THE SIX KEY COMPONENTS OF TWO-GENERATION APPROACHES

Two-generation approaches (2Gen) build family well-being by intentionally and simultaneously working with children and the adults in their lives together.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

- Head Start
- Early Head Start
- child care partnerships
- preK
- home visiting
- Family, Friend, and Neighbor Care (FFN)

K-12

- kindergarten ready
- 3rd grade reading skills
- parent engagement
- graduation and postsecondary prep

POSTSECONDARY & EMPLOYMENT PATHWAYS

- community college
- training and credentials
- workforce partnerships
- employer partnerships

SOCIAL CAPITAL

- peer and family networks
- coaching
- cohort strategies

HEALTH, INCLUDING MENTAL HEALTH

- mental, physical, and behavioral health
- coverage and access to care
- adverse childhood experiences and toxic stress

ECONOMIC ASSETS

- asset building
- housing and public supports
- financial capacity
- transportation



#2GEN

ascend
aspen institute

MINDSET

A new **way of thinking** for designing programs and policies that serve children and parents simultaneously.

STRATEGY

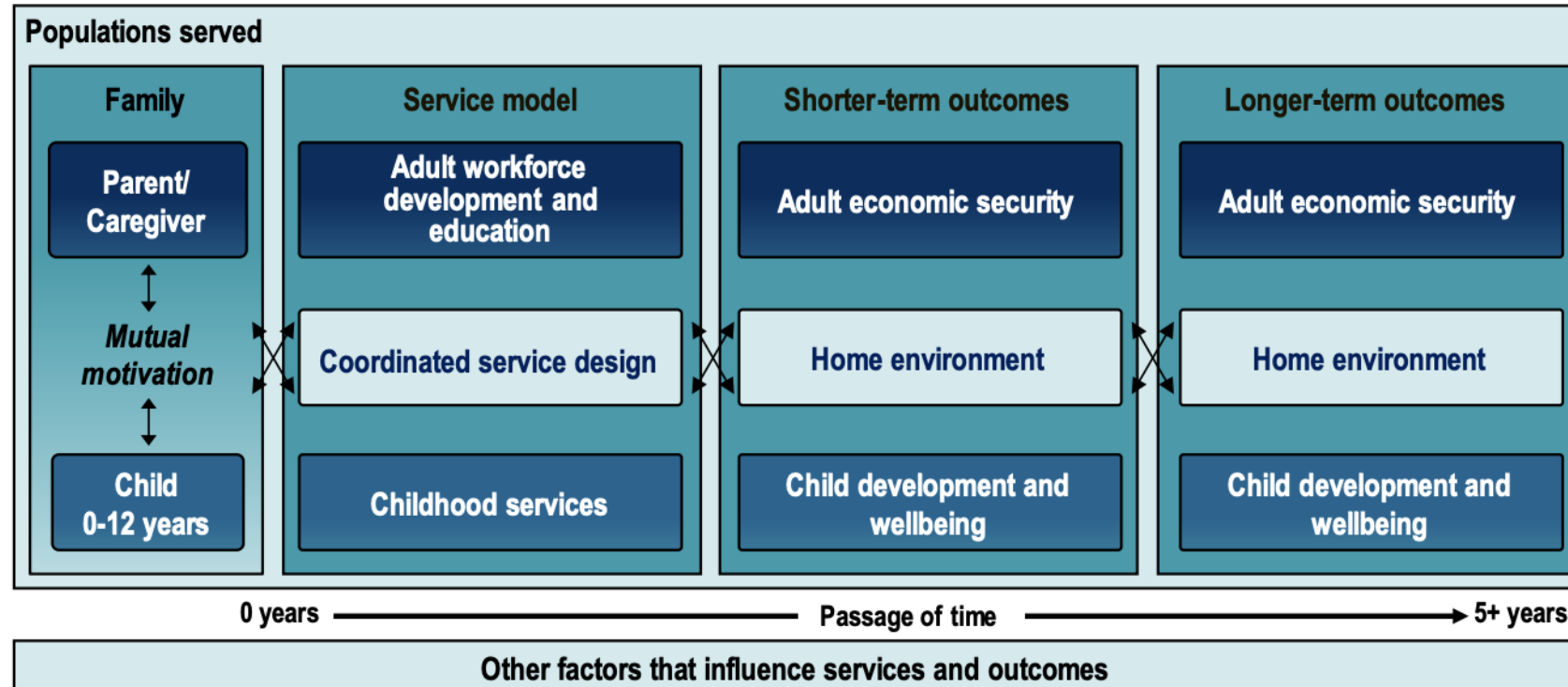
Aligning and/or **coordinating services with other organizations** to meet the needs of all family members.

ORGANIZATION

Providing services and supports to both children and adults simultaneously and tracking outcomes for both.

OPRE Two-Generation Conceptual Framework

Figure 1. Two-generation conceptual framework^a



^a More information on the two-generation conceptual framework is available at:

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/report/conceptual-frameworks-intentional-approaches-improving-economic-security-and-child-well>

Note: The two-generation conceptual framework is an adaptation of the change model for two-generation 2.0 programs by Chase-Landsdale & Brooks-Gunn (2014). See also Ascend at the Aspen Institute (2016) for a logic model developed at the same time as this conceptual framework.²



Appendix B. Whole Family Approach Logic Model Example (Illustration)

Vision

Families reach their full social and economic potential.

Theory of Change Statement: If we provide comprehensive, customized support to children and the adults in their lives to help them achieve developmental milestones, social connectedness, and economic stability then we have the best opportunity to break the intergenerational cycle of poverty in our community.

Target Population: Families in Sunflower County below 200% of FPL with children ages 0-5, and parents/caretakers 16-25 in age.

Parent, Child, Family, and Agency

Inputs

Coaches
Family Advocates
Unrestricted funding for unconditional \$ for family barrier removal
Donated monthly meals
Free bank account with First Trust
Family Life Assessment
Co-location of Head Start at community college
Agency-wide intake and assessment
WFA coordinated case planning team

Services/ Activities

Parents
Family-Centered Coaching
High-demand job skill training
Supports to reduce material hardship (e.g., food, rental assistance)
Financial capability coaching/training
Work supports (e.g., transportation, childcare, uniforms)

Child
Early childhood education
Health and nutrition services
Educational tutoring

Family
Family cohort bi-weekly meeting
Family counseling
Executive functioning skill building

Outputs

Parents
Coaching meetings
Goal plan and quarterly assessment
Family budget
90% attendance in post-secondary training program

Child
95% attendance in class
Quarterly X assessment

Family
Attendance and engagement at events
Friendships and support
Counseling sessions

Short-term Outcomes

Parents
Income changes at 6/12/18 months
Reduced material hardship
Improvement on Family Assessment Matrix in one or more domains
Obtained high school diploma and/or equivalency certificate
Obtained a credential, certificate, or degree for educational or vocational skills
Increased executive functioning skills

Child
Child language, literacy, and math on grade level

Family
Increase in the number of people the family can count on in difficult times

Long-Term Outcomes

Parents
of families with income above 225% of FPL
of families with increased financial stability
of individuals who report an increase in growth mindset
of individuals who increase executive functioning skills

Child
of children ready for kindergarten
of children with increased social and emotional well-being

Family
of individuals with an increased ability to cope with difficult and/or stressful situations.
of adults with increased positive parenting behaviors

Parent, Child, Family Outcomes (Examples)

Parent Outcomes

- Increase income above 200% of FPL
- Increased financial stability
- Increase in education level
- Obtained a certification
- Increased growth mindset

Child Outcomes

- Child ready for kindergarten
- Child on grade-level reading
- Achieved third- grade reading level on time
- Child on grade-level math skills

Family Outcomes

- Increase in the number of people the family can count on in difficult times
- Increased ability to cope with difficult and stressful situations
- Increase in positive parenting behaviors

What WFA measurement challenges have you experienced?

Or

What concerns do you have about measuring WFA?

WFA Measurement Considerations

WFA principles call for a person-centered practice that builds self-determination and capabilities. This requires agencies to balance flexibility for families while holding to the SEM purpose of the WFA.

- Flexibility can lead to lots of different goals and outcomes. What is captured, reported, and used needs to be managed effectively.
- Not all information needs to be collected in all areas all the time! Take a close look at who needs what information and be strategic about what you collect.



WFA Measurement Considerations

- Tracking data annually and not maintaining information from year to year for comparisons across time is problematic. Often this is because we are being regulatory or compliance-focused and letting funders drive the data and reporting.
- Consider short-mid-long-term outcomes.
- Give outputs and process outcomes more consideration.



Parent Outcomes & Measures



CAPLP Case Study

Customer Story

2

A Whole Family coach is supporting a single mom working toward her GED. Initially, she faced barriers, including a lack of transportation and childcare, delaying her start. When school began in the fall, she enrolled in GED classes while her children attended Jumpstart and elementary school. She has already passed her Math and Science tests. With help from the program, she received a laptop for schoolwork and a donated car through Fix It Forward, removing key obstacles. Inspired by the state's North Star Promise program, she's now focused on completing her GED and continuing her education.

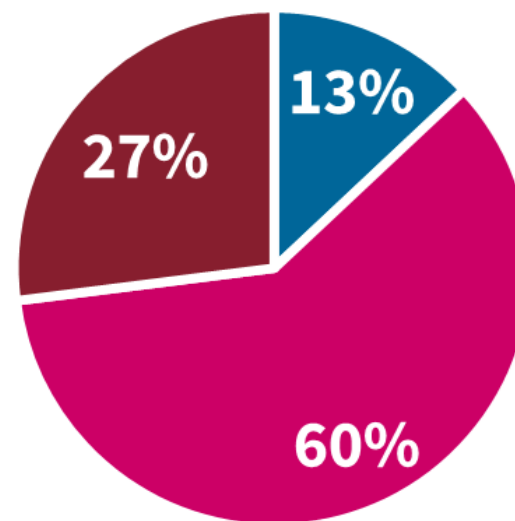


What parent outcomes do you see in this story that you could measure?

Change in Earned Income

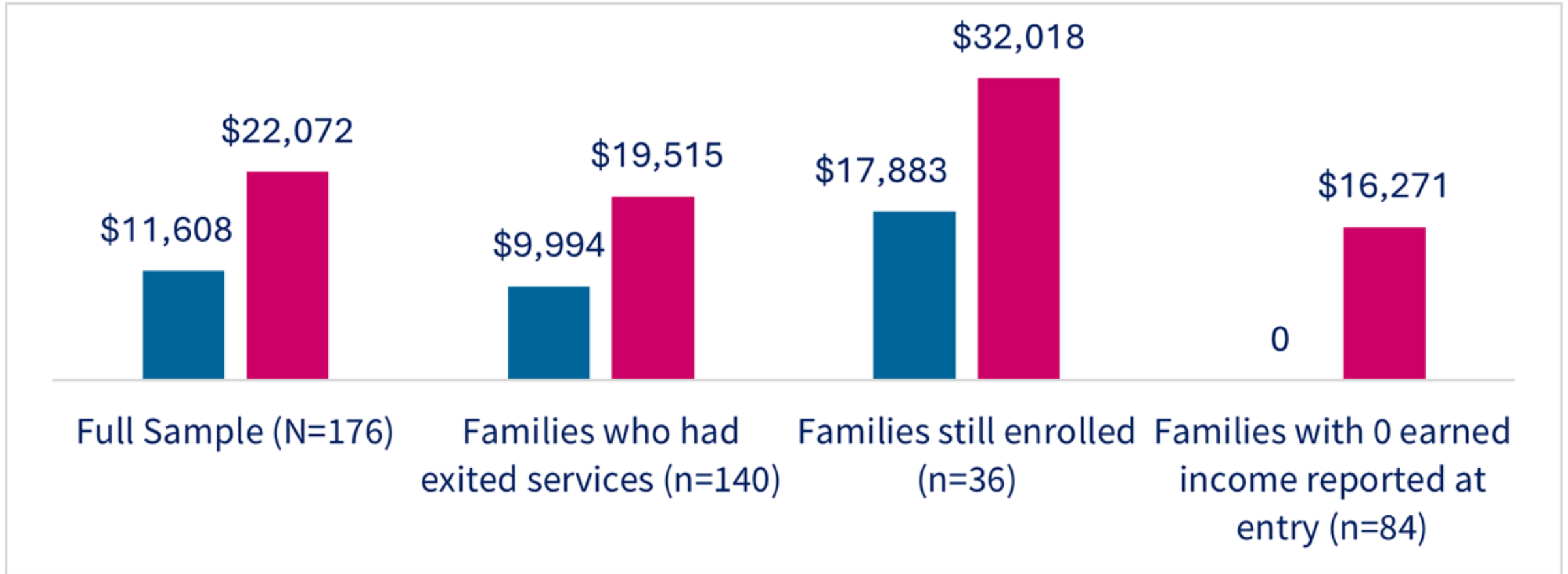
176 Households
VDSS 2Gen Pilot
Six Year Project
6 Community Action Agencies
246 Adults
369 Children under 18
61% Female, 38% Male
63% Female single-parent HH
27% Two-parent families
3% Male single-parent HH

Households

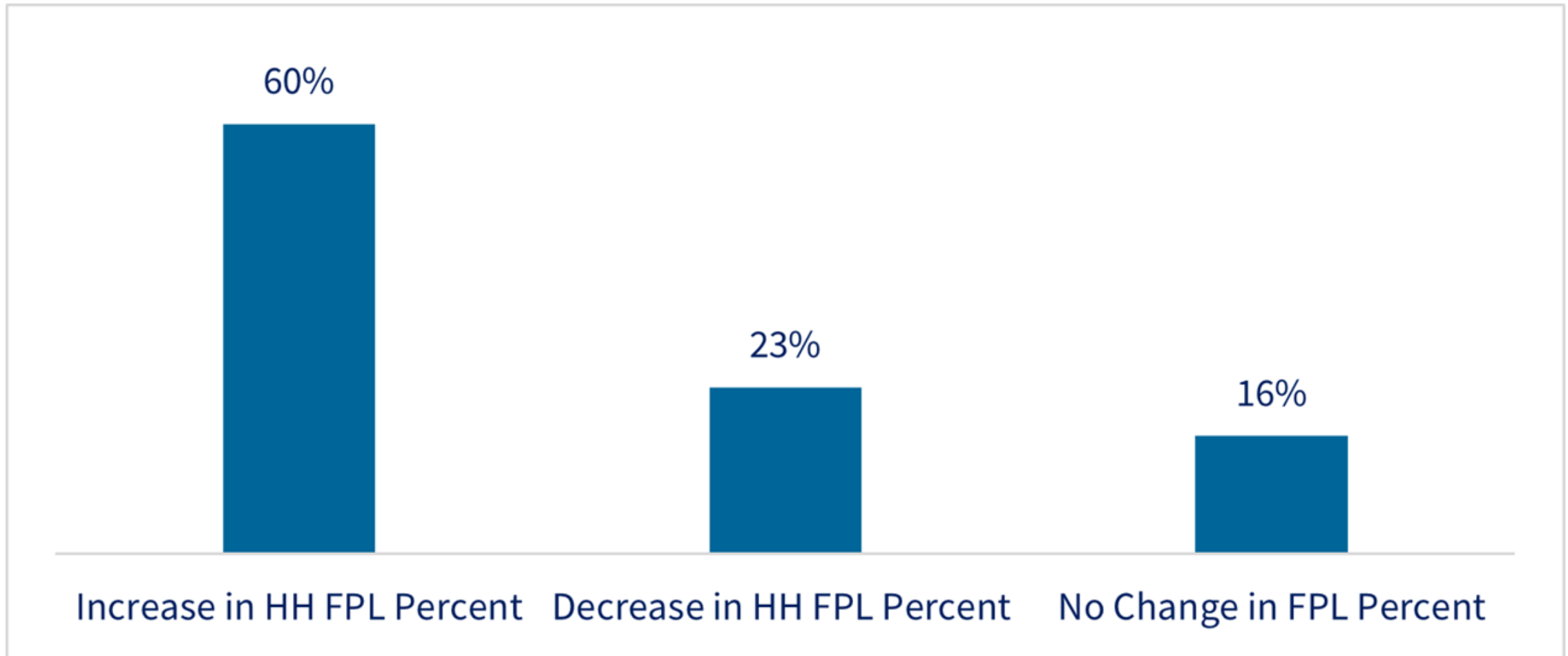


- Decrease in Earned Income
- Increase in Earned Income
- No Change in Earned Income

Changes in Earned Income by Type of Case (N=176)



Change in Percent of FPL at Entry to Exit or Most Recent (N=176)



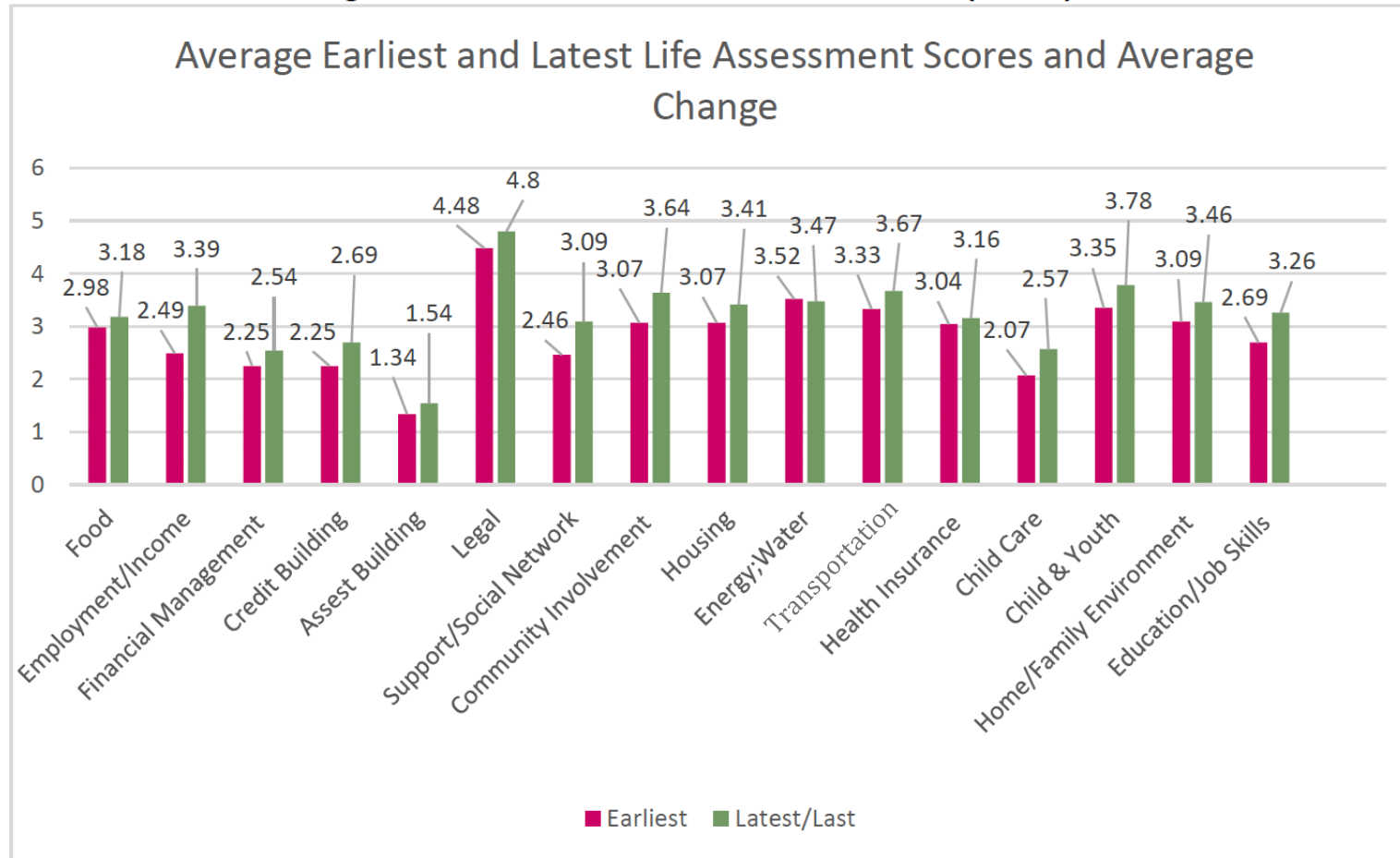
Percentages of Households at Federal Poverty Level Ranges At Entry and Exit/Most Recently

- At enrollment, 78% of households were below 100% of the poverty level
- As of June 30, 2025:
 - The number of households below 100% of the poverty level was 100 (57%), indicating 38 households moved above the Federal Poverty level while participating in WFA.
 - (43%) of the households in the pilot were above 100% of the poverty level as compared to 17% when they started. This number will likely increase as 36 households are still participating and receiving services.

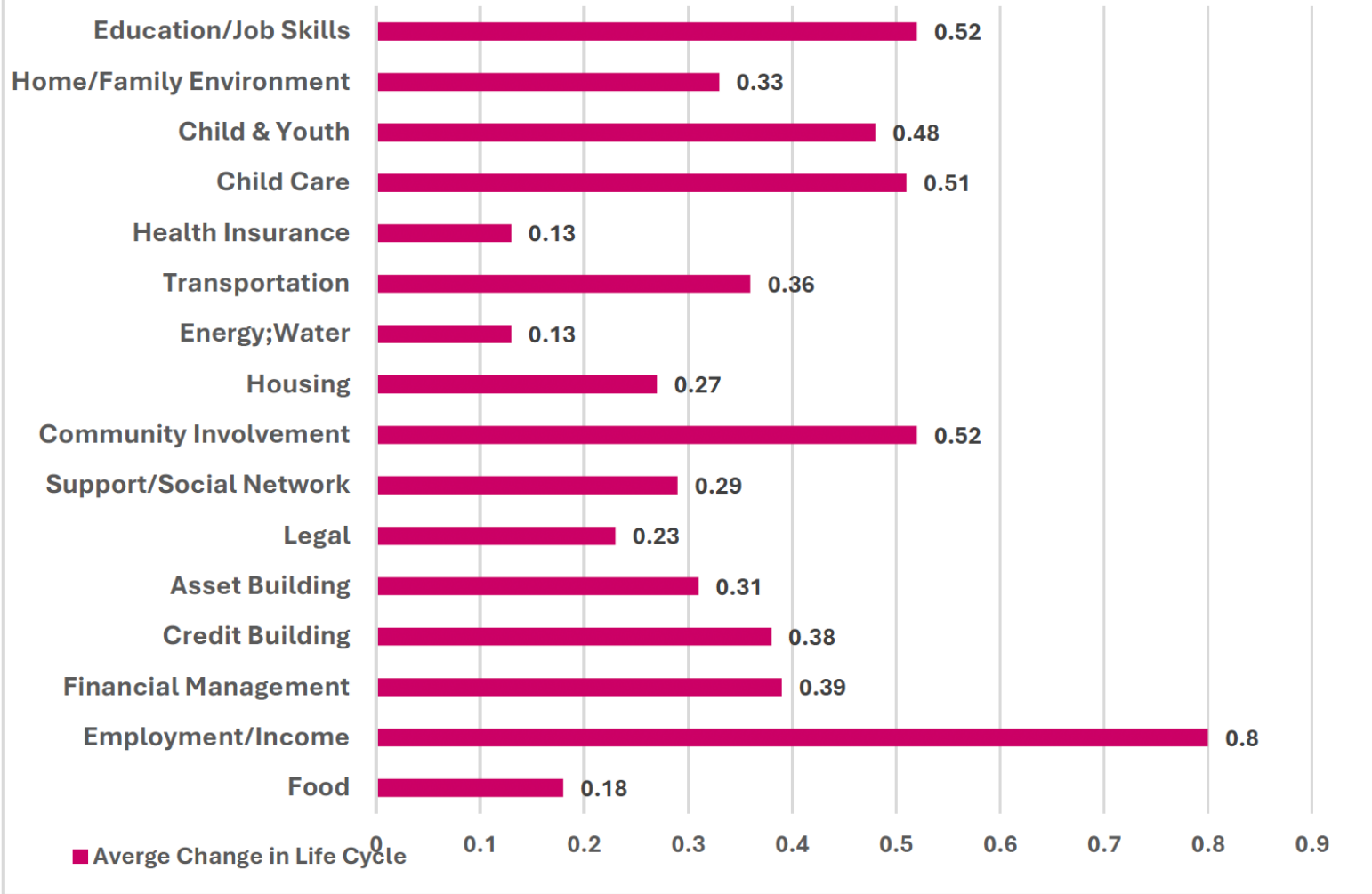
Federal Poverty Level (FPL)	% of Households at FPL Range at Entry	% of Households at FPL Range at Exit or Most Recent
Zero Income	27.93%	14.20%
< 50%	26.26%	17.61%
50.1%-75%	14.53%	10.23%
75.1 %-100%	9.50%	14.77%
100.1.-125%	5.03%	15.91%
125.1-150%	7.26%	11.93%
150.1-175%	6.15%	5.11%
175.1-200%	1.68%	5.68%
200.1-250%	0.00%	2.84%
>250%	1.68%	1.70%

Data for Who?

CHART 6. LIFE SCALE AVERAGE EARLIEST AND LATEST LIFE ASSESSMENT SCORES (N=120)



Average Change in Life Scale Assessment



**Life Scale
Average
Change
Between First
and Last
Assessment**

Parent Outcomes

- Income level (What level of income is family supporting?)
- Income Change
- Obtain Employment (level of wage, living wage)
- Education
 - Levels (H.S., GED, Associates, bachelors) Here you could consider short and mid term outcomes
 - Credentials/ vocational training
- Financial Wellbeing
 - Improved credit
 - Improved financial capability (Consumer Financial Protection Bureau Financial Capability Assessment)

Parent Outcomes

- Health
 - Improved mental health, behavioral health, well-being (identify a measure, see Sparq Tool and others)
- Crosscutting/ Mid-term/Predictors
 - Agency (sense of being in control of one's actions and having the ability to accomplish one's goals)
 - Self-Efficacy (Belief one can achieve their goals despite difficulties)
 - Hope

Measuring Some Other Concepts or Factors

Self-Concept	Worldview
Self-esteem Self-worth Self-efficacy Sense of control Agency Resilience Psychological well-being	Growth mindset Hope Optimism Life satisfaction Social connection Social support Social capital

Online Resources

Stanford University

Stanford | SPARQtools

Search this site...



[Toolkits ▾](#) [Collections ▾](#) [Action Areas ▾](#) [About](#)

Measuring Mobility Toolkit



Example Measure: New General Self-Efficacy

Factor: Power and Autonomy

Age: Adult

Duration: Less than 3 minutes

Reading Level: 6th-8th grade

What

Created by organizational psychologist Gilad Chen and team (2001), the New General Self-Efficacy Scale is an 8-item measure that assesses how much people believe they can achieve their goals, despite difficulties.

Who

Researchers have used this measure with African-Americans living on a low income (Roman, et al., 2009); homeless European-Americans, African-Americans, and Latinx-Americans (Businelle, et al., 2013); first-generation Latinx college students (Garza, Bain, & Kupczynski, 2014); and college students and professionals in the United States and abroad.

How

INSTRUCTIONS

Using a 5-point rating scale (1= strongly disagree; 3 = neither agree nor disagree; 5 = strongly agree), respondents show how much they agree with eight statements, such as “Even when things are tough, I can perform quite well.” Researchers then calculate a score for each respondent by taking the average of their ratings.

Use this Measure

Example Measure: New General Self-Efficacy

RESPONSE FORMAT

1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = neither agree nor disagree; 4 = agree; 5 = strongly agree.

▲ All Survey Questions

1. I will be able to achieve most of the goals that I set for myself.
2. When facing difficult tasks, I am certain that I will accomplish them.
3. In general, I think that I can obtain outcomes that are important to me.
4. I believe I can succeed at most any endeavor to which I set my mind.
5. I will be able to successfully overcome many challenges.
6. I am confident that I can perform effectively on many different tasks.
7. Compared to other people, I can do most tasks very well.
8. Even when things are tough, I can perform quite well.

Child Outcomes and Measures



Child and Youth Outcomes

- Early Childhood (Head Start) measures (Infant/toddler, Preschool)
 - Kindergarten/school readiness
 - Improved approaches to learning development
 - Improved social and emotional development
 - Improved language and literacy development
 - Improved cognition development
 - Improved scientific reasoning development
 - Improved perceptual, motor, and physical development

Child and Youth Outcomes

- On grade reading or math (especially 3rd grade reading level)
- Child/youth maintaining grade C during the school year
- Unemployed youth who have increased skills to obtain employment
- Youth obtained employment
- Improved attendance (short/mid-term outcome)
- Shift and Persist (Sparq tool specifies if appropriate for teens, measures strategies for dealing with stressful situations: shifting and persisting)

Resource: [Early Childhood Developmental Screening: A Compendium of Measures For Children Ages Birth to Five](#)

Family Outcomes & Measures



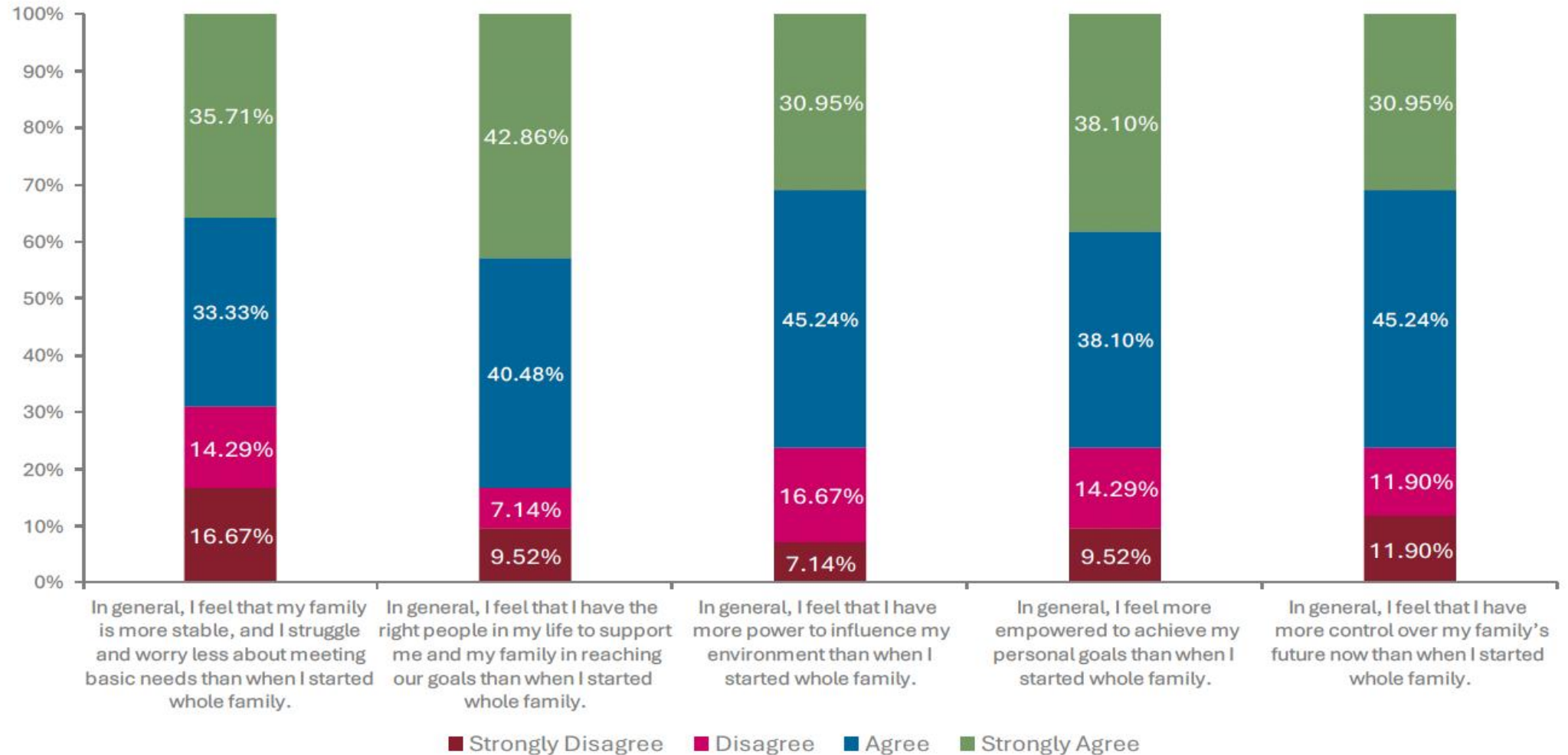
Family Outcomes, Parenting

		Before WFA	After WFA	Change
Confidence in my preparedness to handle parenting challenges	<i>Not at all</i>	25.6%	4.7%	↓ 20.8%
	<i>Somewhat</i>	34.9%	30.9%	
	<i>Completely</i>	39.5%	64.3%	↑ 24.7%
Confidence in my ability to co-parent alongside the other parent	<i>Not at all</i>	27.9%	9.5%	↓ 18.3%
	<i>Somewhat</i>	34.9%	30.9%	
	<i>Completely</i>	37.2%	59.5%	↑ 22.3%
Confidence in my ability to maintain family bonds	<i>Not at all</i>	20.9%	4.6%	↓ 16.3%
	<i>Somewhat</i>	32.5%	20.9%	
	<i>Completely</i>	46.5%	74.4%	↑ 27.9%

Change in Parent Confidence
(N=43)

Chart 14. Parent Experience Related to Issues of Control, Influence, Power and Worry (N=42)

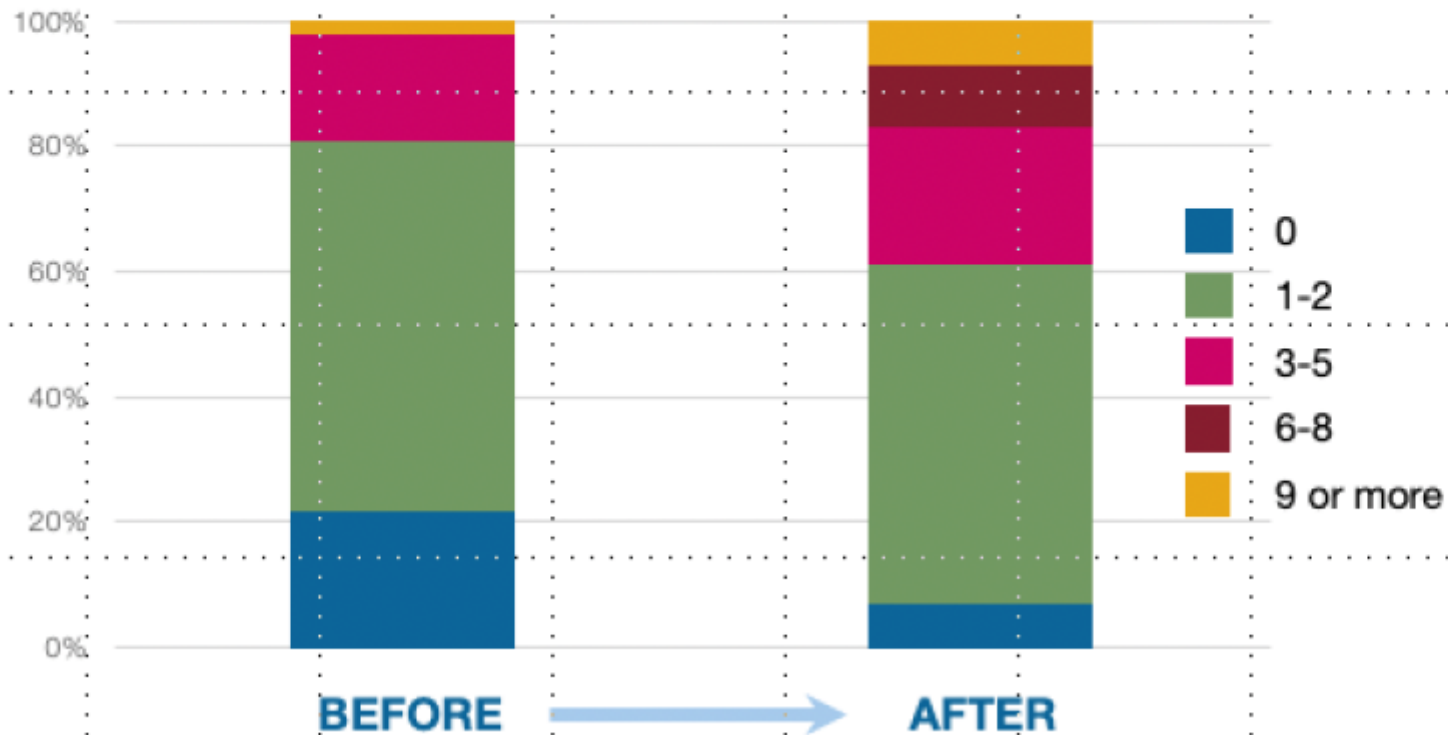
Indicate how much you agree with the following statements



Measuring Social Capital

Chart 14. Support Levels Before and After Pilot Participation (N=43)

Number of people outside your home you could turn to for support during challenging times



Family Outcomes

- Increase in the number of people the family can turn to during challenging times.
- Increase in the number of social connections reported by families over time.
- Increase in family functioning
- Increased positive parenting behaviors
- Increase in the number of volunteer hours contributed
- Increase in the number of community events the family attends

Measures: The juice must be worth the squeeze

Don't get hung up on a lot of measures
Focus on measuring the right things!

Realistically, can you gather the data needed?
Is the measure something that you quantify with relative ease/without significant effort

Existing measures can be leveraged to minimize burden
It is OK to add new measures/processes for gathering, so long as it's not too intensive

Consider, what will we do with this information?
If the answer is nothing, don't measure!



Resources and Learning Opportunities



Measures and Assessment Tools

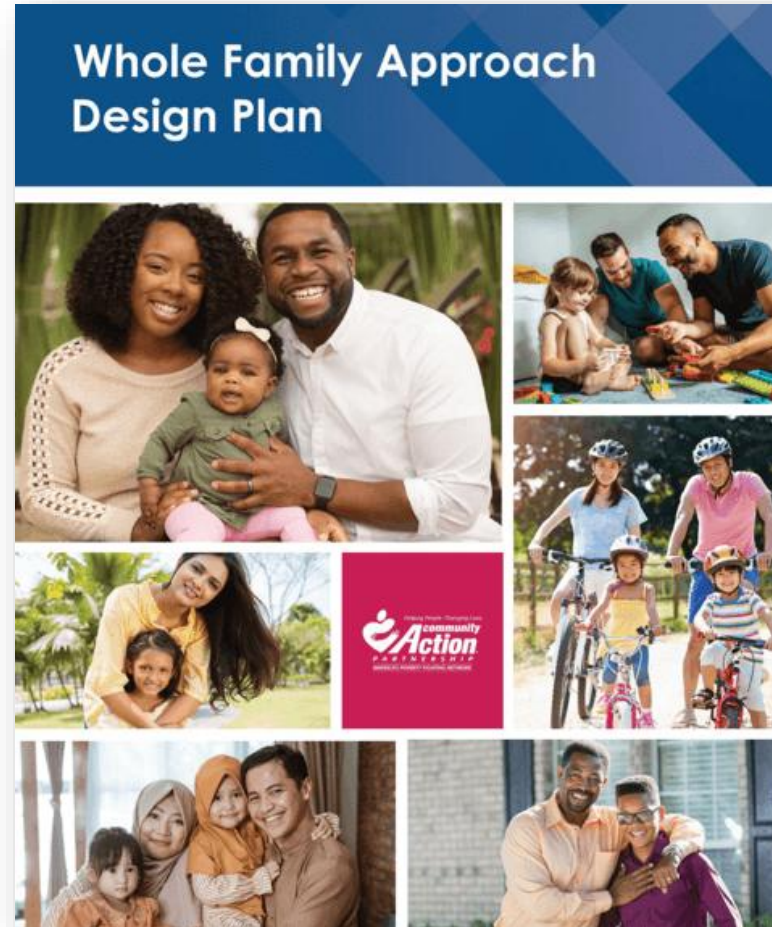
- [Measuring Mobility Toolkit SPARQtools, Stanford University](#)
- [Child and Adolescent Health Measurement Initiative \(CAHMI\), National Maternal and Child Health Measures Compendium](#)
- [Annenberg EdExchange EdInstruments Library](#)
- [The Economic Mobility Catalog, Results for America \(metrics are included for each strategy/outcome\)](#)
- [Compendium of Annotated Measurement Tools, Friends](#)
- [Protective Factors Survey, Friends](#)
- [Positive Psychology Center, University of Pennsylvania](#)

JBA Webinar



Whole Family Approach Resources

The WFA Design Plan is a tool to help develop a WFA Design Plan, including a Theory of Change and Logic Model, which includes measures.



BUILDING STRONGER SYSTEMS, STRONGER FAMILIES

Whole Family Approach Webinar Series

Join us for a 4 part webinar series that highlight real-world implementation strategies and celebrate the progress of the Advanced Regional Community of Practice. In this webinar series, we'll explore what's possible when we center families, align systems, and commit to building pathways to social and economic mobility through a Whole Family Approach.

September 22, 2025

Leading with Purpose: CAPLP's Journey in Advancing Whole Family Work

October 29, 2025

WFA Practitioner's Roundtable Centered on Data

November 5, 2025

Scaling WFA & Measuring What Matters

December 17, 2025

Reimagining Possibility: What WFA Can Become



tinyurl.com/WFASeries25

EXCITING NEW RESOURCE!!!

WHOLE FAMILY APPROACH QUARTERLY DIGEST

NCAP's Whole Family Approach is excited to announce the new Whole Family Approach Quarterly Digest! This quarterly newsletter will highlight tools and resources curated by our Whole Family Approach team.

Sign up at tinyurl.com/WFAdigest



NEW WHOLE FAMILY RESOURCE!!!

WHOLE FAMILY APPROACH DESIGN BRIEFS

The NCAP team, with support from Margaret A. Cargill Philanthropies (MACP), is excited to release a new series of Whole Family Approach design briefs. These briefs highlight the accomplishments of members from the Regional Advanced Community of Practice and serve as a valuable resource for agencies preparing to design and implement a Whole Family Approach.

Check It Out Here!
tinyurl.com/designbriefCAPLP



WHOLE FAMILY APPROACH DESIGN BRIEF SERIES

LAKES & PRAIRIES COMMUNITY ACTION PARTNERSHIP (CAPLP) Moorhead, Minnesota

Program Design

CAPLP began its Whole Family Approach (WFA) journey in 2016, sparked by a leadership transition that opened the door for agency-wide transformation. What started as a pilot initiative evolved into a comprehensive approach to serving families more holistically. CAPLP's early milestones included dismantling internal silos, establishing shared case management, and improving communication across systems and teams. These efforts marked a key shift from operating as multiple divisions to functioning as one integrated agency.

The approach was originally called the "Whole Family Program," and later rebranded as Flourishing Families, reflecting a more intentional focus on supporting entire families in achieving stability and success. In 2020, CAPLP joined the NCAP Regional Community of Practice (COP), which became another turning point in refining and expanding the approach. Being part of the Community of Practice helped deepen learning and implementation through peer exchange and collaboration.

Over time, CAPLP's WFA has evolved from a programmatic pilot to a foundational framework that now informs the agency's overall culture, training, partnerships, and service delivery. This evolution reflects a sustained investment in learning, systems change, and family-centered practices.

Guiding Coalition

CAPLP's guiding coalition has played a central role in the development and ongoing implementation of WFA. Internally, the coalition began with the Executive Director, Whole Family Approach Coordinator, Housing Director, Operations Director, and Learning Director. This leadership-driven group was tasked with breaking down internal silos, building shared case management, and fostering a culture of collaboration and learning across the agency.

In 2023, the guiding coalition expanded to include direct service staff—those working most closely with families and often serving as the "cheerleaders and champions" of customer success. Their inclusion helped bridge the gap between leadership decisions and on-the-ground experience, ensuring that policies and practices are informed by the realities families face.

While the guiding coalition currently consists of CAPLP staff only, the agency recognizes the importance of expanding it to include voices outside the organization. External collaborations so far include key partners such as the Clay County School District—CAPLP's primary referral source.

WFA Timeline

2016		Foundations of Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leadership transition sparks a shift in organizational vision Began dismantling silos and fostering interdepartmental collaboration
2016-2019		Laying the Foundation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developed the initial Whole Family Program Introduced shared case management and cross-team communication Created the Guiding Coalition: ED, WFA coordinator, housing director, operations director, and learning director
2020		Transformation and Peer Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CAPLP joins the NCAP Regional Community of Practice (COP) Begins refining the program into Flourishing Families Investment in professional development around trauma-informed care, family-centered coaching, etc.
2021-2022		Deepening the Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inclusion of direct service staff in training and planning Expanded tools for tracking family outcomes (e.g., Wheel of Life, well-being matrix) No Wrong Door intake and integrated case management solidified "Eat, Play, Learn" staff engagement model launched
2023+		Scaling and Strengthening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expanded guiding coalition to include direct service "champions" Stronger ties with Head Start, blending funding streams Measurable outcomes celebrated: family milestones, increased social capital Enhanced partnerships with Clay County schools and local funders

FRESH FINDS

LEARN

EXPAND

IMPLEMENT

Are you interested in expanding the capacity of your organization to implement innovative programs and services?

Are you interested in improving outcomes for the individuals, families, and communities in your service area?

Are you interested in learning from the experiences of other community leaders across the country?



Sign up for the National Community Action Partnership's new "Fresh Finds" newsletter and be the first to know about new tools, resources, and training opportunities!



tinyurl.com/FreshFinds25

Let's Stay In Touch

Community Action Partnership – National Office

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