

**Strengthening Families Through
Enhanced In-Home Support in Child
Protective Services**

Status Update

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Texas Department of Family and Protective Services

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Strengthening Families Through Enhanced In-Home Support in Child Protective Services

Executive Summary

The passage of Senate Bill 758 during the 80th Legislature, Regular Session, 2007, authorized the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) to implement a program to deliver family preservation and reunification services to families impacted by poverty contributing to neglect. The resulting program was officially called Strengthening Families Through Enhanced In-Home Support, but is commonly referred to as the Strengthening Families Initiative (SFI). The SFI provides non-traditional assistance and benefits as a supplement to traditional services to meet family needs not addressed elsewhere. The unique feature of the program is the provision of monetary benefits. The intent of the initiative is to prevent removals of children from their homes or, when removals are necessary, to speed reunification. In the months following the passage of the legislation, DFPS implemented the program in 15 counties that represent all 11 regions of the state. The initiative was subsequently reauthorized for the next biennium during the 81st Legislature, Regular Session, 2009, and has been expanded to nine additional counties. This report provides a legislatively mandated evaluation of the program.

During fiscal years 2008 and 2009, 1,312 families received SFI services while in the family preservation stage of service and 126 families received SFI services while in the family reunification stage of service. By the end of fiscal year 2009, a total of \$212,750 was expended in Family Enhancement benefits and a total of \$2,578,496 in Family Empowerment benefits were provided. That total includes monies for environment services, personal needs, utilities, family enhancement services, auxiliary services, and transportation services (see Appendix A for details).

Outcomes for SFI and non-SFI families and children were compared. Results of the analyses indicate that removal rates from SFI family preservation cases were lower than traditionally served cases. Recurrence rates of validated abuse/neglect allegations for the family preservation stage of service do not significantly differ for SFI and non-SFI families.

Analyses for the family reunification stage of service indicate that the percentages of SFI and non-SFI children who exit care are not different, although SFI children exit more slowly. In addition, families who receive SFI payments in the family reunification stage are more likely to have a subsequent substantiated investigation than comparison families. These results should be considered preliminary, since there have been few families that have received SFI in the family reunification stage.

Families served through the SFI program continue to be tracked and findings will be incorporated into the Family Focus evaluation that is currently underway. This evaluation will look at the impact of all of the Department's programs aimed at more fully meeting the needs of families in crisis.

Strengthening Families Through Enhanced In-Home Support in Child Protective Services

Overview

The passage of Senate Bill 758, 80th Legislature, Regular Session, 2007, authorized the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) to implement an innovative program to serve families for whom poverty contributed to child neglect. The intent of the initiative was to prevent removals of children from their homes or, when removals were necessary, to expedite the family's reunification. Subsequently, the program was reauthorized for another biennium during the 81st Legislature, Regular Session, 2009. The original bill also charged DFPS with evaluating the program to determine its success in keeping families together. This report updates the implementation report issued in September 2008 and provides initial outcomes for families participating in the program.

The pilot program was officially called Strengthening Families Through Enhanced In-Home Support, but is commonly referred to as the Strengthening Families Initiative (SFI). The program expanded upon existing Family-Based Safety Services¹ and is supported through federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funding. DFPS dedicates 74 caseworkers across the state to the SFI who now provide services in 24 counties. The original 15 counties, which represent all 11 regions, were Lubbock/Potter, Taylor, Tarrant, Bowie/Gregg/Jefferson, Harris, Travis/Williamson, Bexar, Ector, El Paso, and Hidalgo/Nueces. These were subsequently augmented by the addition of Dallas County in December 2008 and Wichita, Cameron, Cass, Orange,

Imagine being a victim of domestic violence and the mother of four children (one of whom needs surgery), and having no transportation. Even though you work as many days as possible, you bring home only \$300-\$600 per month. Your children miss school frequently because they have no clean clothes to wear; or, if they have clothes, they are late to school because there is no alarm clock. And, how can you work in the summers without any child care? One mother in Region 6 found an answer to these questions and more through her SFI worker and, as a result, was then able to afford an alarm clock, school clothes, and summer programs at the YMCA for the children.

¹ Family-Based Safety Services is an umbrella term to describe the extended post-investigation services provided to intact families. Family preservation services are designed to improve family functioning so that children can remain at home, while family reunification services are provided when a child leaves foster care and returns home.

McLennan, Bell, Bryant and Tom Green counties in September 2009.

A maximum of \$3,250 per family can be utilized to address the most pressing poverty-related issues contributing to child neglect. Combined with traditional in-home services, these funds and purchased services for non-recurring, non-traditional expenses can be offered prior to placing a child in care, or as part of the reunification process. From the implementation date of January 2008 to the end of fiscal year 2009, 1,438 families received services through this pilot program.

Program Description

Philosophy

The Strengthening Families Initiative stresses the importance of tailoring all services to the unique needs and characteristics of each family. The following assumptions and strategies for intervention were developed:

- Each family is unique.
- Interventions must be developed with the assumption that parents want to improve the quality of care for their children, but lack personal, financial, or supportive resources.
- All parents have strengths. The caseworker must help the family identify those strengths in the assessment process and build interventions upon those strengths.
- Fathers, as well as mothers, in neglectful families must be engaged and involved in the intervention process.
- Interventions must be culturally sensitive.
- It is essential to develop goals that are time-limited and achievable, as well as clearly stated, and focused on child safety. The parents, the child, and the caseworker should collaborate to determine goals based on the identified problems. The causes of the problems and any barriers to their resolution must also be identified.
- It is sometimes necessary to present the parent with the reality or possibility of the removal of the child. Legal intervention should only be used as a last resort after other reasonable efforts to keep the child safe in the home have been attempted.
- Neglectful parents may be impoverished or lack access to resources. Therefore, an intervention plan must include brokering and advocacy to mobilize concrete formal and informal resources. Successful mobilization of outside resources to meet the family's identified priorities helps to overcome the family's hopelessness, resistance, and distrust of professionals.
- Family-focused interventions that target the family system, not just the parent, are often the most successful.
- A facilitated family meeting should be used to engage the family and their support systems in problem solving.

Eligibility Criteria

Families in the designated counties who meet the following criteria are eligible for the SFI:

- Must be referred by DFPS staff for family preservation or family reunification services;
- Must agree to the services;
- Either,
 - Have a child living in the home or in a parental child safety placement who is at risk of removal if the neglect and poverty-related conditions persist
 - OR
 - Have a family service plan that recommends the return of the child to the home in the near future but poverty-related issues are a potential barrier;
- Have a household income at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty income limits;
- Have a current validated finding of at least one type of neglect that does not involve validated sexual abuse;
- Must include a parent by blood, marriage, or adoption or a managing conservator of the child who is the victim of or at risk of neglect;
- Have an identified problem (a significant underlying cause of which is poverty) in the home environment or family that has contributed to neglect and can be remedied or mitigated by the benefits and assistance of this program;
- Involve a child who is a U.S. citizen or a qualified legal alien who meets or is exempt from the five-year bar of the 1996 Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act; and,
- Have had a risk rating² at a level of concern of “somewhat” or higher.

Service Provisions

Due to the intensive intervention services inherent in the SFI, DFPS stipulates that only specially trained family preservation caseworkers may provide services in the pilot.

Caseload size and composition, frequency of contacts, and service planning requirements are specific to intensive intervention services.

Size and Composition of Caseload: SFI caseworkers may not carry more than ten cases at a time and may not work additional traditional Family-Based Safety Services cases.

Frequency of Contacts: On average, an SFI worker is expected to spend seven to ten hours per month in face-to-face contact with each assigned family. Each child and each

² Risk ratings come from an investigation risk assessment tool caseworkers use to aid in their decisions regarding a case. For each of seven categories, such as "Child Vulnerability," caseworkers assign a concern rating ranging from "none" to "extreme," with "somewhat" being in the middle.

parent or caregiver receiving services is seen twice a week in face-to-face contacts, the majority of which should occur within the home. Increases in contacts should correspond to increases in risk that may develop while working with the family. Consequently, decreases in contacts should correspond to decreases in risk that may develop while working with the family.

Duration: The average SFI case should be resolved within 60 to 120 days.

Service Planning: The Family Plan of Service³ must be completed by the 21st day following the opening of the family preservation stage and must be developed in the context of a family meeting (consistent with the principles of Family Group Decision Making) that is held prior to the 21st day. The focus of the meeting is to engage and partner with the family in identifying the problems they are experiencing, potential solutions that include goals and objectives, how funds may be used (including restrictions and limitations), and time frames for actions and activities. All use of funds associated with this program must be identified in the Family Plan of Service and must be related to the problems, goals, and objectives identified in the plan.

SFI Funding: Assistance and benefits provided under the SFI are provided as supplements to traditional services. Services available through CPS contracts and community services are to be utilized first while the resources of SFI should meet needs not provided for elsewhere. Additionally, expenditures should target services that promote family stability and must be specifically identified in the Family Plan of Service.

Five broad objectives were identified as promoting family stability:

1. Prevent removal or speed reunification;
2. Maintain the safety of the child;
3. Meet the child's needs;
4. Relieve family stress; or
5. Enhance family strengths and functioning.

The funding has two components: ⁴

- (1) **Family Enhancement benefits** - a cash assistance component in the amount of \$250 which must be provided (if needed) during the first 4 months of a case opening. Monetary assistance can be used for items the family deems necessary to

³ The Family Plan of Service is to be completed by the 21st day following the opening of the family preservation stage of service and within 30 days of a child's reunification. The family service plan, among other things, must contain information about what is expected of the family to reduce risk, what DFPS will do to assist the family and how progress will be evaluated.

⁴ At present, new rules are being prepared which, if approved, will alter the dollar amounts available, timeframes for expenditure, and list of approved expenditures.

address one of the five objectives listed above, within the guidelines of policy. Examples include but are not limited to:

- Groceries;
- Medication prescribed for a family member who has no other means of purchasing (not covered by Medicaid);
- Payment of rent on a non-recurring basis; and
- Purchase of auto repairs.

(2) **Family Empowerment benefits**, and/or Purchased Goods and Services - up to a cumulative amount of \$3,000 to pay for activities and/or goods and services. Funds are used to address one of the five objectives listed above within the guidelines of policy. Family Empowerment benefits can, for example, be used to enhance a parent's ability to provide normalization activities for the children, as well as to improve family functioning and child well-being. The family identifies the goods and services that best meet their needs.⁵

Implementation History

While DFPS Family-Based Safety Services staff routinely strive to make services available to the families with whom they work, the provision of actual dollars and substantial purchases was an adjustment, for both staff and the families. As was noted in the September 2008 Implementation Report for the SFI, the initial efforts reached relatively few families and additional efforts were needed to increase awareness of the program among CPS investigation staff. As a result there were two primary approaches to increase awareness of the SFI. The program specialist overseeing the SFI made numerous site visits to further train SFI staff on the benefits and service delivery techniques of the more intense services characteristic of the program. Additionally, SFI workers increased participation at meetings discussing cases and what services they should receive in order to divert more families into the program. These efforts resulted in a two-thirds increase in the number of families served during the second year of the program from the first year.

The additional services also represented a paradigm shift for families who were sometimes suspicious of the motives behind the SFI and were occasionally reluctant to voice their needs. As a result of these learning curves, not all families received the maximum amount of benefits available to them. As expressed by SFI staff, this was particularly true when issues of substance abuse were prominent in the families served. As DFPS staff learned how to best make services available, more families received the full expenditures.

⁵ Funds may not be spent on items that are illegal to purchase, possess, or use. Other prohibited items include alcohol, tobacco, pornography, dating or escort services, or automobiles.

Program Status

Since DFPS began serving families in January 2008, a total of 1,438 families and 5,010 children have been provided SFI services in either a family preservation or family reunification stage of service through the end of fiscal year 2009. Table 1 shows 91 percent (1,312) of the families served were provided family preservation services in an attempt to keep the child safely in the home rather than removing the child during the investigation. The remaining 9 percent (126) received SFI services as part of the family reunification process after a stay in foster care.

Table 1: Number of Families and Children Served Through the SFI Program

	<i>Family Preservation (FPR)</i>	<i>Family Reunification (FRE)</i>
Fiscal Year 2008 Families Served	490	49
Fiscal Year 2008 Children Served	1,701	177
Fiscal Year 2009 Families Served	822	77
Fiscal Year 2009 Children Served	2,880	252
Total Families Served	1,312 (91%)	126 (9%)
Total Children Served	4,581 (91%)	429 (9%)

Family Enhancement Expenditures

Table 2 shows the number of families and total dollars expended for Enhancement support during fiscal years 2008 and 2009. A total of \$212,750 in enhancement benefits aided 776 families in family preservation and 75 families in family reunification stages of service. All 851 families received the full Enhancement payment of \$250 in cash assistance.

Table 2: Fiscal Year 2008 and 2009 Enhancement Expenditures

	<i>Number of Families Receiving SFI</i>	<i>Number of Families Receiving Enhancement Expenditures</i>	<i>Total Enhancement Dollars</i>
FPR	1,312	776	\$194,000
FRE	126	75	\$18,750
Total	1,438	851	\$212,750

Family Empowerment Expenditures

More families were the recipients of Family Empowerment expenditures. These types of purchases are grouped into the following categories: environmental services, personal needs, utilities, family enhancement services, auxiliary services, and transportation services. Examples of the types of services within each category are displayed in Appendix A. These purchases differ from the Enhancement expenditures in that these products are purchased by the caseworker on behalf of the family, rather than providing dollars directly to the family.

Family Empowerment expenditures for new families receiving the SFI in family preservation totaled just over \$895,029 in fiscal year 2008 and \$1,420,077 in fiscal year 2009⁶. Families participating in family reunification services received a total of \$96,900 in fiscal year 2008 and \$166,490 in fiscal year 2009.

Table 3: Family Empowerment Expenditures and Families Served

	Fiscal Year 2008 FPR	Fiscal Year 2008 FRE	Fiscal Year 2009 FPR	Fiscal Year 2009 FRE
Number of NEW Families Receiving SFI	490	49	822	77
Number of Families Receiving Empowerment Expenditures	425	44	714	75
Environmental Services	\$435,022	\$44,487	\$631,821	\$71,702
Personal Needs	\$256,143	\$33,426	\$484,501	\$66,558
Utilities	\$73,858	\$6,556	\$120,005	\$12,000
Family Enhancement Services	\$42,609	\$2,035	\$69,432	\$6,400
Auxiliary Services	\$24,034	\$3,780	\$45,369	\$4,751
Transportation Services	\$63,362	\$6,617	\$68,949	\$5,080
Total	\$895,029	\$96,900	\$1,420,077	\$ 166,490

From the program's inception in January 2008 through the end of fiscal year 2009, families in the family preservation stage of service received a total of \$2,509,106 in Family Enhancement and Family Empowerment assistance. Families participating in

⁶ Expenditures may have been spent in a subsequent fiscal year. Calculations are made based on the fiscal year in which the family entered the SFI program.

family reunification received a combined total of \$282,140 in Family Enhancement and Family Empowerment assistance through SFI. The grand total for all SFI services during fiscal years 2008 and 2009 was \$2,791,246.

Outcomes

Naturally, the question arises, "What have we gained from these expenditures?" One goal of the initiative was to prevent children from entering foster care due to issues that could be resolved by addressing the family's state of poverty. As always, the primary goal of DFPS is to keep these children safe. Thus, any goals of the SFI were approached with this overriding objective in mind. The rate of removals (the percent of children removed from SFI stages) and the rate at which children in SFI families are subsequently found to be a victim in a later investigation are indicators of the impact of the SFI program.

SFI in Family Preservation

In order to compare the SFI families with an equivalent group of families, a comparison group of families was selected from all non-SFI family preservation cases. Criteria for inclusion in this group included that:

- 1) services had been received since fiscal year 2008;
- 2) the family preservation services were received at the intensive level;⁷
- 3) there was a primary allegation of some form of neglect; and
- 4) the family income was less than \$40,550 annually.

A comparison of the two groups indicated that SFI families were somewhat more likely to be African-American (26.3 percent) and less likely to be white (25.3 percent) compared to the non-SFI group who were 15.4 percent African-American and 29.3 percent white. An additional test showed that these differences in receipt of the SFI services by race were statistically significant. The difference in the levels of risk in the two groups was statistically significant (see Appendix C for details); however, it appears a greater portion of the SFI group had a low risk score⁸ (43.7 percent in the SFI group

⁷ The family preservation stage includes services to families to prevent removal of children from the home. The family preservation stage cannot be opened until the investigation stage is concluded. The family preservation stage has six stage types: Regular, Moderate, Intensive, Contracted Regular, Contracted Moderated, and Contracted Intensive. Each includes support to the family to prevent removal of children at risk of abuse/neglect.

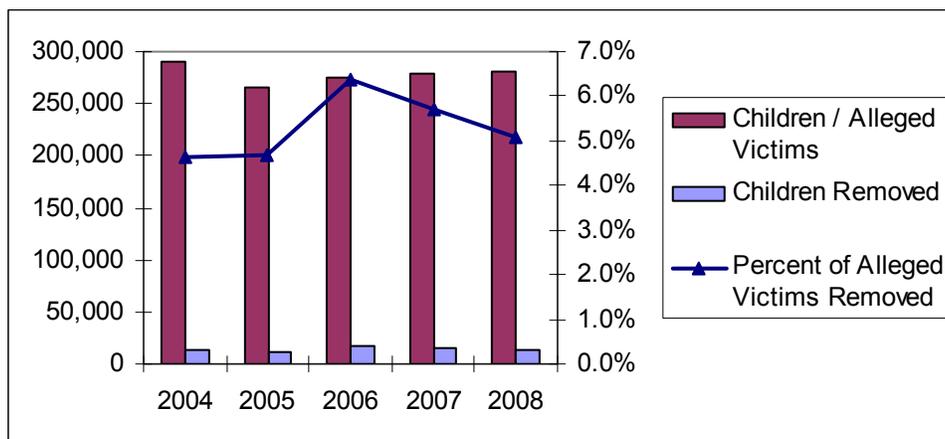
⁸ Risk scores between 7 and 19 were categorized as "low risk." Those between 20 and 26 were "moderate risk" and those between 27 and 35 were "high risk."

compared to 28.2 in the non-SFI group). Similarly, 18.1 percent of the non-SFI group was comprised of high risk cases – twice the proportion of high risk cases in the SFI group.

Removal Avoidance

Considerable effort has been made by DFPS staff over the past several years to keep children safe at home and reduce the rate of child removals by providing more family-based, family-focused services such as Family Group Decision-Making and Family-Based Safety Services. Additionally, disproportionality specialists have raised community awareness of family needs and sought to increase resources for families experiencing a crisis. Since the implementation in January 2008, the SFI complements these programs by offering families the tangible resources necessary to address some of the challenges encountered by poverty. Since fiscal year 2006, all of these efforts have resulted in an overall reduction in the number of children who have experienced a removal from their home. As Figure 1 illustrates, the percentage of alleged child victims who have been removed has dropped from a high of 6.4 percent in fiscal year 2006, to 5.7 percent in fiscal year 2007, and 5.1 percent in fiscal year 2008.⁹

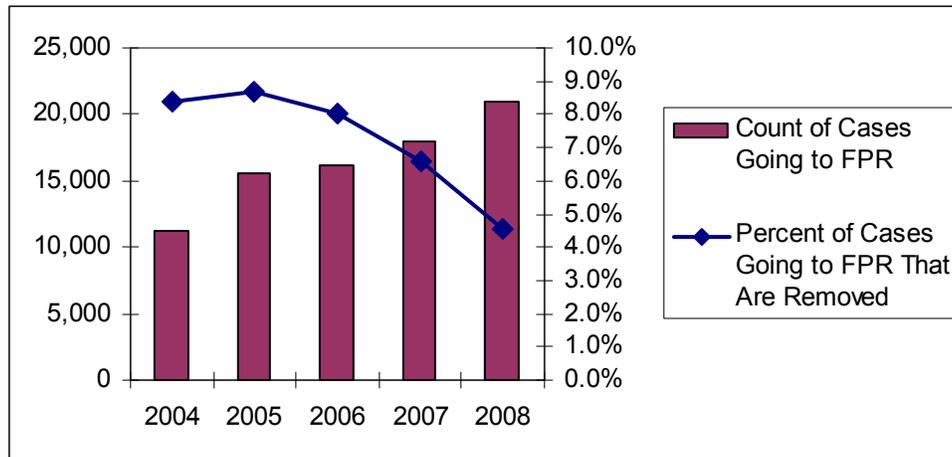
Figure 1: Alleged Victims and Removals over Time



With multiple efforts underway to keep families intact, it is difficult to determine how any single program is contributing to this overall goal. However, it does appear that increased efforts to provide families with Family-Based Safety Services have contributed to the overall decline in removals. Figure 2 shows the number of families receiving family preservation services has been increasing, while the rate of removals from those stages has been reduced.

⁹ Fiscal year 2009 data was not finalized at the time of analysis and is therefore not included.

Figure 2: Number of Cases Going to FPR and Percentage of FPR Cases Resulting in a Removal over Time



Of the 1,031 SFI cases available for analyses, 101 (9.8 percent) of those served in the family preservation stage of service resulted in a child removal;¹⁰ 930 cases (91.2 percent) experienced no removal. The numbers for the comparison group of families show 39 cases (15 percent) resulting in a removal from a pool of 259 intensive family preservation cases that met the low income and neglect criteria. However, despite the same level of service intensity selected in the family preservation stage, the SFI family preservation families had been assessed at somewhat lower levels of risk during the investigation stage of service. This difference in investigation risk level, however, did not influence the removal rates. The differences in removal rates, even when controlling for risk, are statistically significant (see Appendices B and C).

After Family Preservation Services

No significant differences in recurrence rates were found between the SFI and non-SFI families receiving family preservation services. Of the 1,031 SFI families available for analysis, 35 families (3.4 percent) experienced a validated allegation within 12 months of the prior investigation closure date. The rate of recurrence from family preservation for families receiving services in the SFI is not statistically different from the rate of recurrence for the comparison group (3.9 percent).¹¹

¹⁰ Removal data as of December 2009.

¹¹ Recurrence for these families is defined as a subsequent substantiated investigation of a family member within 12 months of the case being opened for Family Preservation services.

Exit Rates After Family Reunification Services

For analysis of family reunification, as with the family preservation analysis, a comparison group was created from those children and families who received traditional family reunification services. The outcomes for children in families that received the SFI in the family reunification stage of service were compared to the outcomes of children receiving traditional family reunification services during the same time period and who were from low income families with neglect issues. Determining equity with regard to risk levels, however, was not as clear. A comparison of the risk ratings created at investigation revealed that there was not a statistically significant difference in the average risk scores of the two groups. However, the risk assessment conducted at the investigation stage is not necessarily indicative of the level of risk present at the time of reunification after extensive services have been offered.¹² Additionally, policy regarding the use of SFI services at the point of reunification states that DFPS staff “must determine that providing Strengthening Families services will result in reunification sooner than would otherwise be possible” (CPS SFI Policy and Procedures Manual). Children who are offered traditional family reunification services are offered these services because they are considered good candidates for reunification and there is a strong chance that the increased services will result in reunification. However, if children who receive the SFI are offered these services because the additional assistance will help them reunify more quickly than they would have otherwise, they may not be as fully prepared for reunification as families in traditional family reunification services. This suggests that there may be a difference between these two groups that is not captured in risk scores or other recorded variables and cannot be accounted for. Therefore, it is not clear that the two groups of children were provided reunification services when the cases were at comparable levels of risk.

The analyses indicated that, overall, an equal percent of the children in the two groups exited care and that children in families that received the SFI had an equal chance of exiting to reunification. While the likelihood of a child served in the SFI in the family reunification stage returning to their home is the same as for children receiving traditional family reunification services, they do appear to do so more slowly than children in the comparison group.

Twenty percent of the children in the SFI families had another substantiated investigation after the start of the family reunification stage compared to 11 percent of

¹² While staff make risk assessments as part of the reunification process, the data collection system is not equipped to capture risk assessments made beyond the investigation stage of service; therefore, the data was not available to the evaluators.

the children in comparison cases.¹³ This result is important given that the comparison group had a higher average number of days for a subsequent substantiated investigation to occur compared to the SFI group (373 days versus 247 days). Additional analysis confirmed that children in families that received the SFI in the reunification stage were more likely to have another confirmed investigation regardless of other family or child characteristics.

The overall results of each analysis did not change when other factors were considered. However, the addition of controlling factors (such as race, income, single parent, etc), did decrease the negative effect of the SFI. This indicates that, although it appears that the SFI may slow reunification, it may do so because the program is offered to more difficult families and it is these family-specific factors that make this group more difficult to reunify than the non-SFI comparison group. The results from the various analyses are included in the Appendix D.

Family Satisfaction

In addition to the quantitative analysis of the program, a survey of families that had participated in the SFI program and of new participants for whom services were completed began in March 2009. The ongoing survey is aimed at gathering participants' opinions on the efficacy of the program. To date, 86 survey questionnaires have been returned.

Of these families, 86 percent (74 families) reported that overall the CPS services were very helpful. None of the families indicated that the services were not at all helpful. Ninety-three percent (80 families) reported that their caseworker was very helpful. Eighty-seven percent (75 families) indicated that the money they received was very helpful. Seventy-seven percent (66 families) responded that the family meetings were very helpful. Finally, 80 percent (69 families) reported seeing their caseworker very often each month.

The survey questionnaire also included an open-ended item for respondents to suggest ways the SFI could be improved. The vast majority of the responses were positive, indicating how the program had helped or that the program was already working well. Many respondents stated that the financial support was secondary to the emotional support that the caseworkers provided. A few respondents remarked that their caseworker's efforts could have been improved in some way, either by having more information on their case or simply not switching cases in the middle of the family's

¹³ Recidivism for these children is defined as a subsequent substantiated investigation within one year of the start of Family Reunification services. It differs from the previous definition because the unit of analysis for Family Reunification is children and the unit of analysis for Family Preservation is the family.

interaction with CPS. One respondent recommended giving families more information about the process when a child is removed. Overall, it seems that recipients of the SFI are pleased with the benefits they received and feel the benefits have had a positive impact for their family.

Conclusion and Next Steps

The passage of Senate Bill 758 during the 80th Legislature, Regular Session, 2007, authorized the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) to implement the SFI, which was then reauthorized during the 81st Legislature, Regular Session, 2009.

During fiscal years 2008 and 2009, 1,312 families received SFI services in the family preservation stage of service and 126 families received SFI services in the family reunification stage. By the end of fiscal year 2009, \$212,750 had been distributed through Family Enhancement payments and \$2,578,496 had been distributed in Family Empowerment payments.

Analyses of the SFI cases served during the first 14 months of this innovative program indicate that:

- Removal rates from the family preservation stage of service for the SFI families were statistically lower than the comparison families;
- The safety of the SFI children in family preservation is not compromised;
- The recurrence rates among the SFI and comparison groups receiving family preservation services are similar;
- Reunification rates are the same for children who received the SFI in the family reunification stage and children in comparison cases, although reunification is slower for children in the SFI families; and
- Recurrence rates after the start of the family reunification stage are higher for children in the SFI families relative to children in comparison cases.

Evaluation of the program is difficult since the outcomes in the absence of the SFI are not known. However, the approach chosen was to identify similar cases in the same time frame and attempt to adjust for case severity. The preliminary results of the evaluation show that the SFI, along with other removal prevention programs, have reduced removals while at the same time kept the SFI children equally as safe as those in the comparison group. Furthermore, subsequent removals from family preservation stages in the SFI are fewer than in the comparison group. Results in the family reunification stage of service were not as positive, though fewer children were served in this stage and more time may be needed in order to be certain of these findings.

Families served through the SFI program continue to be tracked and findings will be incorporated into the Family Focus evaluation¹⁴ that is currently underway. This evaluation will look at the impact of all of the Department's programs aimed at more fully meeting the needs of families in crisis. One aspect of the evaluation that is expected to yield more finely-tuned comparison groups is the creation of propensity scores. Propensity scores are used to reduce selection bias by equating groups based on covariates such as family size, income, risk and so forth.

¹⁴ The Family Focus evaluation will evaluate the chief components of the Family Focus program, including the SFI, Family Team meetings, Family Group Conferences, and kinship placements. Where appropriate, these interventions are evaluated for their effectiveness at keeping families together while keeping children safe in the Family Preservation stage of service and for increasing or speeding exits to reunification in the Family Reunification stage of service.

Appendix A

Examples of Empowerment Services Provided

Environmental Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Assistance locating and obtaining housing · Security deposits and rental assistance for housing · Essential household items, furniture and appliances, such as heaters, cribs, beds, stoves, tables, refrigerators, mattresses, bedding · Essential household supplies, such as brooms, mops, and cleaning supplies · Essential home repairs, such as plumbing, heating, and structural repairs · Telecommunication equipment, such as a telephone
Personal Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Personal care items, such as clothing and personal hygiene items · Employment-related items, such as tools, equipment, uniforms, footwear
Utilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Utility deposits or emergency grants to avoid utility cut-offs
Family Enhancement Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Therapeutic family recreation · Babysitting · Memberships, such as the YMCA
Auxillary Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · One-on-one parent coaching · (Line removed- 03/30/10) · Special learning aids, such as books, computers, flash cards, and auxiliary aids like TTY or TTD · Special educational services, such as tutoring, GED classes, ESL classes, and undergraduate standardized test preparation classes
Transportation Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Transportation reimbursement for family visits, medical treatment or employment · Car repairs · Car rental and lodging (on trips)

Appendix B

Glossary

Logistic regression: A form of regression that predicts the probability of an occurrence of a particular event based on one or more predictor variables.

Confidence Interval: An interval in which an odds ratio or other statistic falls corresponding to a given probability. For the results of this report, the confidence interval is 95% which corresponds to a significance of .05.

Odds Ratio: A value that measures effect sizes of a group in comparison to another group. An odds ratio of one indicates that the event is neither more nor less likely to occur in the comparison group than in the reference group. An odds ratio greater than one indicates the event is more likely to occur in the comparison group than in the reference group. Likewise, an odds ratio of less than one indicates the event is less likely to occur in the predicted group than for the reference group.

Propensity Score: The probability of a unit being assigned to a particular condition in a study given a set of known covariates.

Significance Testing: When performing statistical analyses, the significance test is used to determine if the values calculated are statistically different. Significance values less than .01 are considered highly significant. Significance values greater than .05 are not considered significant. In these analyses, an odds ratio may indicate a difference between the reference and predicted groups, however if the significance value is greater than .05, the odds ratio is not considered statistically different from one or the reference group. In the analyses, odds ratios that are significant are followed by an asterisk.

Survival Analysis: A form of regression that measures the association between the time to the occurrence of a particular event and one or more predictor variables.

Appendix C

Descriptive Data and Outcomes for Groups Receiving and Not Receiving SFI in the Family Preservation (FPR) Stage of Service

Dataset Details

This dataset was assembled by including only cases that met the criteria for the treatment or control groups. The treatment group included 1,031 cases that had received the SFI since the start of the program in January 2008 through March 2009. The control group included 259 cases that had not received the SFI as of April 2009 (when the data was pulled), were low-income, entered Family Preservation in FY 2008 or later, and had a primary allegation of neglect. Recurrence was calculated by determining whether there was a subsequent substantiated investigation within one year of the opening of Family Preservation. Data regarding removals were updated in December 2009 and reflect only removals that occurred from the Family Preservation Stage.

Family Income and SFI

	Family Income \$0 - \$10,149	Family Income \$10,150 - \$20,549	Family Income \$20,550 - \$40,549	Family Income \$40,550 +	Total
Intensive FPR Count	144	88	27	0	259
Intensive FPR Percent	55.6%	34.0%	10.4%	0.0%	100%
SFI FPR Count	654	288	86	3	1031
SFI FPR Percent	63.4%	27.9%	8.3%	0.3%	100%
Total Count	798	376	113	3	1290
Total Percent	61.9%	29.1%	8.8%	0.2%	100%

Ethnicity and SFI

	No Ethnicity Recorded	Asian	Black	Hispanic	Indian	Other	White	Total
Intensive FPR Count	0	0	40	132	1	10	76	259
Intensive FPR Percent	0.0%	0.0%	15.4%	51.0%	0.4%	3.9%	29.3%	100%
SFI FPR Count	2	2	271	452	1	42	261	1031
SFI FPR Percent	0.2%	0.2%	26.3%	43.8%	0.1%	4.1%	25.3%	100%
Total Count	2	2	311	584	2	52	337	1290
Total Percent	0.2%	0.2%	24.1%	45.3%	0.2%	4.0%	26.1%	100%

Risk and SFI

	Low Risk (score below 19)	Medium Risk (score between 20 and 26)	High Risk (score 27 or greater)	Total
Intensive FPR Count	73	139	47	259
Intensive FPR Percent	28.2%	53.7%	18.1%	100%
SFI FPR Count	451	497	83	1031
SFI FPR Percent	43.7%	48.2%	8.1%	100%
Total Count	524	636	130	1290
Total Percent	40.6%	49.3%	10.1%	100%

Removals and SFI

	Not Removed from FPR	Removed from FPR	Total
Intensive FPR Count	220	39	259
Intensive FPR Percent	84.9%	15.1%	100%
SFI FPR Count	978	53	1031
SFI FPR Percent	94.9%	5.1%	100%
Total Count	1150	140	1290
Total Percent	89.1%	10.9%	100%

Recurrence and SFI

	Did Not Recur	Did Recur	Total
Intensive FPR Count	249	10	259
Intensive FPR Percent	96.1%	3.9%	100%
SFI FPR Count	996	35	1031
SFI FPR Percent	96.6%	3.4%	100%
Total Count	1245	45	1290
Total Percent	96.5%	3.5%	100%

Logistic Regression* Removed from Family Preservation

Characteristics	Odds Ratio	Significance Value
Received SFI in FPR	.689	.036
High Risk	2.52	.0005
Moderate Risk	1.59	.012

The reference category for the dependent variable is "no removal." For the independent variables, the reference categories are "did not receive the SFI in FPR" and "Low Risk."

* This analysis was conducted using a one-tailed test.

Logistic Regression* Recurrence from Family Preservation

Characteristics	Odds Ratio	Significance Value
Received SFI in FPR	.912	.40
High Risk	1.41	.240
Moderate Risk	1.06	.429

The reference category for the dependent variable is "no recurrence." For the independent variables, the reference categories are "did not receive the SFI in FPR" and "Low Risk."

* This analysis was conducted using a one-tailed test.

Appendix D

Exit and Recurrence Outcomes for Children in the Family Reunification Stage of Service

Dataset Details

In the dataset there are 250 children and 103 cases that received the SFI in the family reunification stage. Some children were cut from the dataset for analysis due to missing information. The comparison dataset includes 2,636 children. Children in the comparison group were in cases in the family reunification stage since this is the only stage where a family is eligible to receive SFI after a removal has occurred, that had an allegation of any type of physical neglect but not an allegation of sexual abuse, where the family's income was below the cutoff for inclusion in the SFI program, the removal occurred in fiscal year 2006 or later based on the earliest removal year of most cases that received the SFI, and the case was in one of the 15 counties where the SFI was initially available.

Survival Analysis Model of Time to Exit to Reunification with Only SFI Variable

Characteristics	Odds Ratio	95% Confidence Interval
SFI in FRE	.757*	.649 - .882

Survival Analysis Model of Time to Exit to Reunification with Other Factors

Characteristics		Odds Ratio	95% Confidence Interval
Intervention	SFI in FRE	.787*	.669 - .927
	Family Group Conference after Removal	.821*	.734 - .918
Marital Status	Not Married	.820*	.734 - .915
	<i>Married = reference</i>		
Family Income	\$10,150 - \$20,549	.970	.838 - 1.124
	\$0 - \$10,149	.757*	.656 - .874
	<i>\$20,550 - \$40,549 = reference</i>		
Risk Score	20-26	.828*	.734 - .934

Characteristics		Odds Ratio	95% Confidence Interval
	27-35	.834*	.719 - .967
	<i>7-19 = reference</i>		
Teen Parent		.894	.782 - 1.023
Race	Black	1.151	.994 - 1.333
	Hispanic	1.157*	1.015 - 1.319
	Asian	1.689	.845 - 3.377
	Indian	1.320	.400 - 4.355
	Other	.978	.730 - 1.310
	<i>Anglo = reference</i>		
Number of Children in the Family		.937*	.902 - .974
Average Age of Children in the Family		1.017	.996 - 1.037
Removed from FPR		.847*	.752 - .954
Caretaker Characteristics	Drug Abuse	.954	.861 - 1.057
	Emotionally Disturbed	.901	.772 - 1.051
	Inadequate Housing	.821*	.717 - .939
	Incarcerated	.863	.731 - 1.019
	Unable to Cope	1.008	.893 - 1.137
	Death	.656	.269 - 1.604
	Not Applicable (no characteristics recorded)	.797	.504 - 1.260
Removal Reasons	Abandonment at Entry	.717*	.519 - .992
	Risk of Emotional Abuse	.611*	.417 - .895
	Refusal to Accept Parental Responsibility	.956	.664 - 1.377
	Risk of Neglectful Supervision	.900	.752 - 1.076
	Risk of Physical Abuse	1.111	.993 - 1.243

Characteristics		Odds Ratio	95% Confidence Interval	
Removal Reasons (continued)	Risk of Physical Neglect	1.012	.88 - 1.152	
	Risk of Sexual Abuse	1.512	.370 - 6.185	
	Abandonment - Baby Moses	.012	.000 - .0127	
Region	Region 1	.889	.705 - 1.120	
	Regions 2&9	1.478*	1.102 - 1.983	
	Regions 4&5	2.199*	1.718 - 2.814	
	Region 6	.730*	.612 - .870	
	Region 7	.849	.697 - 1.034	
	Region 8	1.036	.876 - 1.225	
	Region 10	.699*	.524 - .934	
	Region 11	1.619*	1.356 - 1.932	
	<i>Region 3 = reference</i>			
	Gender	Female	.992	.907 - 1.085
		<i>Male = reference</i>		
Age at Entry	Under 1 year old	.976	.811 - 1.174	
	1-5 years old	1.040	.914 - 1.185	
	13-16 years old	1.108	.907 - 1.353	
	17 years old	5.528*	2.545 - 12.006	
	<i>6-12 years old = reference</i>			
Previous History with CPS		1.104	.922 - 1.322	
Child Characteristics	Medical	1.261	.925 - 1.720	
	Drug/Alcohol	.849	.693 - 1.040	
	Emotional	.900	.720 - 1.126	
	Learning	.959	.807 - 1.139	
	Special Needs	.654*	.503 - .850	
	None Recorded	1.069	.952 - 1.200	
Sibling Group		.950	.828 - 1.088	

*Statistically significant

Logistic Regression Model of Odds of Exiting to Reunification with Only SFI Variable

Characteristics	Odds Ratio	95% Confidence Interval
SFI in FRE	1.168	.873 - 1.562

Logistic Regression Model of Odds of Exiting to Reunification with Other Factors

Characteristics		Odds Ratio	95% Confidence Interval
Intervention	SFI in FRE	1.140	.837 - 1.552
	Family Group Conference after Removal	.726*	.596 - .884
Marital Status	Not Married	.796*	.647 - .981
	<i>Married = reference</i>		
Family Income	\$10,150 - \$20,549	.986	.742 - 1.310
	\$0 - \$10,149	.772	.590 - 1.012
	<i>\$20,550 - \$40,549 = reference</i>		
Risk Score	20-26	.719	.576 - .898
	27-35	.816	.618 - 1.077
	<i>7-19 = reference</i>		
Teen Parent		1.011	.787 - 1.298
Race	Black	1.054	.816 - 1.362
	Hispanic	1.450*	1.141 - 1.843
	Asian	4.326	.516 - 36.251
	Indian	1.201	.120 - 11.985
	Other	.931	.561 - 1.545
	<i>Anglo = reference</i>		
Number of Children in the Family		.987	.992 - 1.070
Average Age of Children in the Family		1.030	.992 - 1.070
Removed from FPR		.902	.727 - 1.118

Characteristics		Odds Ratio	95% Confidence Interval
Caretaker Characteristics	Drug Abuse	1.180	.980 - 1.421
	Emotionally Disturbed	1.087	.817 - 1.446
	Inadequate Housing	.765*	.604 - .969
	Incarcerated	.721*	.543 - .957
	Unable to Cope	1.170	.931 - 1.471
	Death	.723	.167 - 3.138
	Not Applicable (no characteristics recorded)	.573	.281 - 1.166
Removal Reasons	Abandonment at Entry	.661	.402 - 1.088
	Risk of Emotional Abuse	.455*	.249 - .832
	Refusal to Accept Parental Responsibility	1.116	.575 - 2.167
	Risk of Neglectful Supervision	.808	.577 - 1.132
	Risk of Physical Abuse	1.291*	1.044 - 1.598
	Risk of Physical Neglect	1.127	.883 - 1.440
	Risk of Sexual Abuse	NA	NA
	Abandonment - Baby Moses	NA	NA
Region	Region 1	1.523	.950 - 2.441
	Regions 2&9	2.626*	1.329 - 5.189
	Regions 4&5	1.583	.972 - 2.580
	Region 6	.920	.667 - 1.270
	Region 7	.902	.636 - 1.279
	Region 8	.821	.605 - 1.114
	Region 10	.551*	.347 - .873
	Region 11	1.136	.816 - 1.584
	<i>Region 3 = reference</i>		
Gender	Female	.955	.809 - 1.127
	<i>Male = reference</i>		

Characteristics		Odds Ratio	95% Confidence Interval
Age at Entry	Under 1 year old	1.000	.712 - 1.404
	1-5 years old	1.133	.888 - 1.444
	13-16 years old	.854	.584 - 1.248
	17 years old	.793	.187 - 3.360
	<i>6-12 years old = reference</i>		
Previous History with CPS		1.263	.893 - 1.787
Child Characteristics	Medical	1.272	.743 - 2.177
	Drug/Alcohol	.890	.628 - 1.262
	Emotional	1.278	.845 - 1.932
	Learning	1.162	.845 - 1.596
	Special Needs	.775	.491 - 1.223
	None Recorded	1.435*	1.168- 1.764
Sibling Group		.917	.707 - 1.189

*Statistically significant

Recurrence and SFI Crosstabulation

		Did not Recur	Recurred	Total
Did Not Receive SFI in FRE	Count	2350	286	2636
	Percent	89.2%	10.8%	100%
Did Receive SFI in FRE	Count	201	49	250
	Percent	80.4%	19.6%	100%
Total	Count	2551	335	2886
	Percent	88.4%	11.6%	100%

The Pearson Chi-Square value is 17.040 and is significant at the .000 level.

Logistic Regression Model of Recurrence and SFI with Only SFI Variable

Characteristics	Odds Ratio	95% CI
SFI	1.962*	1.400 - 2.751

*Statistically significant

Logistic Regression Model of Recurrence and SFI with Other Factors

Characteristics		Odds Ratio	95% CI
Intervention	SFI	1.535*	1.053 - 2.236
	Family Group Conference after Removal	.783	.585 - 1.049
Marital Status	Not Married	1.039	.774 - 1.396
	<i>Married = reference</i>		
Family Income	\$10,150 - \$20,549	.938	.610 - 1.442
	\$0 - \$10,149	1.099	.737 - 1.639
	<i>\$20,550 - \$40,549 = reference</i>		
Risk Score	20-26	.772	.544 - 1.096
	27-35	.908	.603 - 1.366
	<i>7-19 = reference</i>		
Teen Parent		.738	.513 - 1.061
Race	Black	.668	.445 - 1.004
	Hispanic	.847	.601 - 1.192
	Asian	.000	NA
	Indian	.000	NA
	Other	2.098*	1.106 - 3.982
	<i>Anglo = reference</i>		
Number of Children in the Family		1.107*	1.001 - 1.224
Average Age of Children in the Family		.958	.905 - 1.014
Removed from FPR		.713	.504 - 1.009
Caretaker Characteristics	Drug Abuse	1.436*	1.086 - 1.900
	Emotionally Disturbed	.830	.538 - 1.279

Characteristics		Odds Ratio	95% CI
	Inadequate Housing	.832	.584 - 1.187
	Incarcerated	1.234	.823 - 1.851
	Unable to Cope	1.744*	1.277 - 2.382
	Death	.000	NA
	Not Applicable (no characteristics recorded)	.915	.252 - 3.315
Removal Reasons	Abandonment at Entry	.988	.425 - 2.297
	Risk of Emotional Abuse	.637	.228 - 1.781
	Refusal to Accept Parental Responsibility	1.848	.813 - 4.199
	Risk of Neglectful Supervision	.516*	.333 - .799
	Risk of Physical Abuse	1.414*	1.064 - 1.878
	Risk of Physical Neglect	.996	.710 - 1.399
	Risk of Sexual Abuse	.000	NA
	Abandonment - Baby Moses	.000	NA
Region	Region 1	.420	.222 - .794
	Regions 2&9	1.649	.883 - 3.078
	Regions 4&5	.454*	.224 - .918
	Region 6	.198*	.117 - .336
	Region 7	.440*	.259 - .749
	Region 8	.373*	.247 - .563
	Region 10	.441*	.217 - .893
	Region 11	1.108	.749 - 1.639
	<i>Region 3 = reference</i>		
Gender	Female	1.131	.888 - 1.440
	<i>Male = reference</i>		
Age at Entry	Under 1 year old	1.079	.661 - 1.764
	1-5 years old	.976	.685 - 1.390
	13-16 years old	.858	.465 - 1.585
	17 years old	.000	NA
	<i>6-12 years old = reference</i>		

Characteristics		Odds Ratio	95% CI
Previous History with CPS		1.241	.797 - 1.932
Child Characteristics	Medical	1.476	.711 - 3.064
	Drug/Alcohol	1.133	.681 - 1.887
	Emotional	.845	.440 - 1.622
	Learning	1.334	.836 - 2.129
	Special Needs	.858	.433 - 1.703
	None Recorded	1.218	.893 - 1.662
Sibling Group		1.336	.897 - 1.990

*Statistically significant