

Strong Families/Safe Children

Michigan's Implementation of Federal Title IV-B, Subpart 2
'Promoting Safe & Stable Families'

Fiscal Year 2005 Program Evaluation Statewide Summary Report

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Prepared for the Michigan Department of Human Services

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Strong Families/Safe Children Program Description

Strong Families/Safe Children (SF/SC) is Michigan's community-based and statewide collaborative initiative for the federal "Promoting Safe and Stable Families" legislation (PL 105-89, 1997; PL 107-133, 2001). The federal program was previously named "Family Preservation and Family Support Services" (OBRA, PL 103-66, 1993). The Michigan Department of Human Services (DHS) is the designated state fiduciary agent.

SF/SC funds the planning and delivery of community-based family support, family preservation, time-limited reunification, and adoption promotion and support services. Family-centered and strength-based principles are promoted for services to be timely, flexible, coordinated, and accessible, as well as respectful of families and cultures.

Child Safety, Permanency, and Improved Functioning to Strengthen Families are the program goals for this federal funding. Funding is used for services to at-risk families and children to accomplish the following:

- To keep children safe within their home, and prevent the unnecessary separation of families
- Prevent child maltreatment
- Promote family strength and stability
- Return children in care to their families in a safe and timely manner
- Provide permanent alternatives for children who cannot return home safely
- Promote and support more adoptions out of the foster care system and help families maintain permanency.

The program requires a collaborative planning process. Michigan's 83 counties participate in county-based, community collaborative groups. The Community Collaborative groups are comprised of local child welfare stakeholders that include the Department of Human Services, Community Health, Education, public and private child and family service organizations, courts, and consumers. Each county is allocated SF/SC funds. To access funds for services, collaboratives are required to submit a service plan to the State for approval. Plans are based on local service needs for at-risk families and children.

Reporting Requirements and Program Evaluation

SF/SC funded services require the identification of locally developed client outcomes with numerically measurable objectives. The '**outcome**' defines the desired positive result(s) for participants of service delivery. The '**objective**' is the numerically stated measure for the desired outcome. If the numerical objective is met or surpassed, the service outcome is successfully achieved.

SF/SC services are linked to a federal program goal (child safety, permanency, or improved family functioning) based on the type of service (family support, preservation, reunification, or adoption promotion and support), the target population, and the desired outcome(s). *Collaborative groups are required to complete a year-end Annual Report on service delivery detailing actual expenditures by federal service category, numbers served, local outcome data results, and, the federal goal targeted by each service and its outcome(s).*

Comparing and analyzing the planned local service outcomes and the outcome data results is the focus of the program evaluation, which is, to determine if services achieve intended outcomes. Since each service and its outcomes are linked to a federal program goal, progress towards achieving the federal goals of child safety, permanency, and improved functioning to strengthen families is also assessed.

SF/SC Expenditures Fiscal Year 2005

Federal program instructions prescribe a minimum 20% of funds for each of four mandated service categories. It is allowable for a service category to be less than 20% when supported by a strong rationale (identified in local service plans). Local program administration and planning costs are capped at 10% according to federal program instructions. Table 1 shows the statewide percent distribution of expenditures by Federal Service Category for FY 2005. Percentages are based on FY 2005 statewide program total expenditures of \$12,621,564.44.

Federal Service Category	FY 2005 Statewide SF/SC Expenditures
Family Support	37 %
Family Preservation-Placement Prevention	31 %
Time Limited Family Reunification	13 %
Adoption Promotion and Support	10 %
Local Administrative Costs	9 %
Total	100 %

TABLE 1: Percent Distribution FY 2005 SF/SC Expenditures by Federal Service Category

SF/SC Service Examples

Examples of SF/SC services by Federal Service Category are:

Family Support	Family Preservation Placement Prevention	Time-Limited Reunification	Adoption Promotion/Support
Anger Management	Alternative Education	Counseling	Adoption Advocate
Building Strong Families	Case Management	CASA	Adoptive Parent Support
Counseling	Conflict Mediation/Resolution	Domestic Violence Services	Adoption Promotion
Family Advocate	Crisis Counseling	Family Reunification	Counseling
Family Support Worker	Crisis Intervention	Families Together Building Solutions	CASA
Healthy Families	Delinquency Programming	Follow Up Care Services	Foster/Adoptive Parent Mentoring
Housing Services Coord.	Domestic Violence Assistance	Homemaker	Foster/Adoptive Parent Recruitment & Training
Mentoring	Families Together Building Solutions	Kinship Caregiver Support	Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Assistance
Parenting Aide	Housing Crisis Services Coordination	Mentoring (Family)	Kinship Caregiver Support
Parenting Skills	Homeless Family Services	Parenting Skills	PATH Adoption Training
Peer Support	Intensive Community-based Youth Services	Respite Services	Post Adoption Services
Playgroups	Parent Aide/Homemaker	Substance Abuse Trtmt., Follow Up, Support	Respite Services
School Success	Respite Services	Supervised Visitation	Wraparound Coordination
Teen Parent Support	Substance Abuse Treatment	Wraparound Coordination	
Tutoring	Wraparound Coordination		
Youth Companion			

Numbers Served Fiscal Year 2005

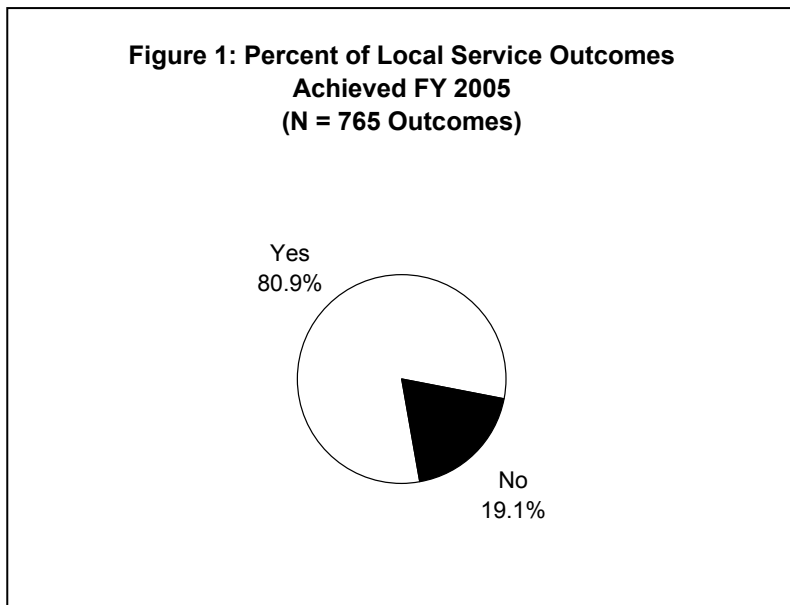
Strong Families/Safe Children served 69,623 customers in FY 2005.

Local outcomes were developed to impact positive changes for service participants defined as: family unit (65.4%); children and youth (30.6%); parents and other primary caregivers (4.1%).

Progress of SF/SC Local Service Outcomes

FY 2005 Annual Reports from the counties detail 350 direct service programs implemented for families and children. 765 local service outcomes were identified within the 350 service programs.

Descriptive statistical analysis using frequencies and cross-tabulations of reported outcome data shows:



- **80.9% of all reported outcomes were achieved. (Figure 1)**
- **Of outcomes achieved, 60.5% had a success rate of 90% or higher and 31.4% had a success rate of 100%.**

The percent of SF/SC local service outcomes achieved has increased from 76.0% in FY 2000 to 80.9% in FY 2005.

Services and Outcomes Classified by Federal Program Goal

The “Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997” and the “Promoting Safe and Stable Families Amendments of 2001” placed increased emphasis on the goals of child safety, permanency, and improved family functioning (well-being). Definitions for these federal goals are modeled from the American Humane Association and the National Association of Public Child Welfare Administrators *Matrices of Indicators for Child Welfare Service*. Definitions are expanded by SF/SC to reflect the goals of the Department and its Program Improvement Plan for federal Child and Family Service Reviews.

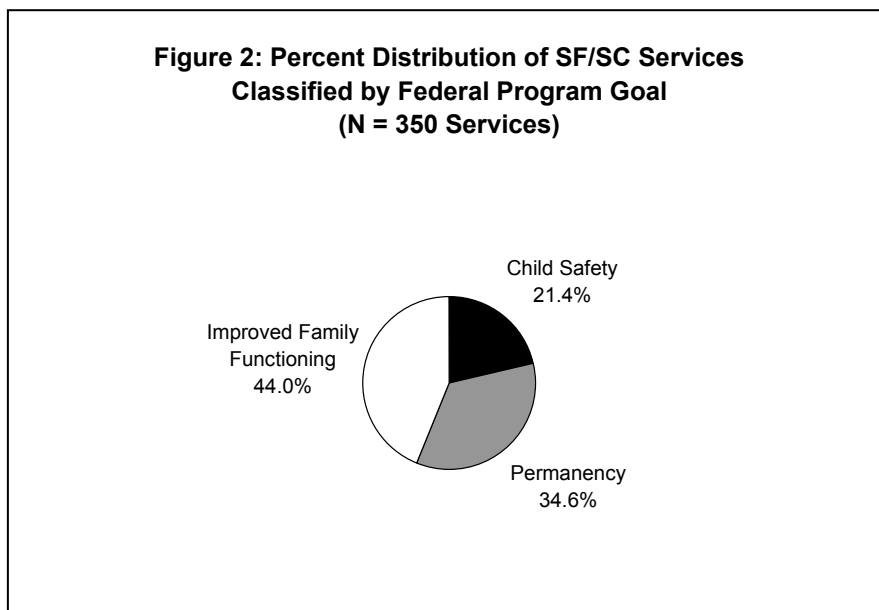
- **Child Safety** – Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate. Children are protected from abuse and neglect. Child safety is first and foremost.
- **Permanency** – Family preservation, family continuity, reunification, or alternative permanency plan. Children will safely reside in their own homes, when they cannot reside safely at home, they will maintain stable, permanent family and kinship ties. When children cannot reside safely in own home, children placed out-of-home will have safe and timely reunification with their family, or an alternative permanency plan. When children cannot reside safely in own home, children placed out-of-home will not experience repeat placements or languish in the system.
- **Improved Functioning to Strengthen Families** - Parenting role and skills are positively strengthened and supported. Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children’s needs; child developmental needs are recognized and met; social, cultural, and identity needs are

recognized and met; behavioral, emotional, and health needs are recognized, improved, met. Family relations and interactions are improved.

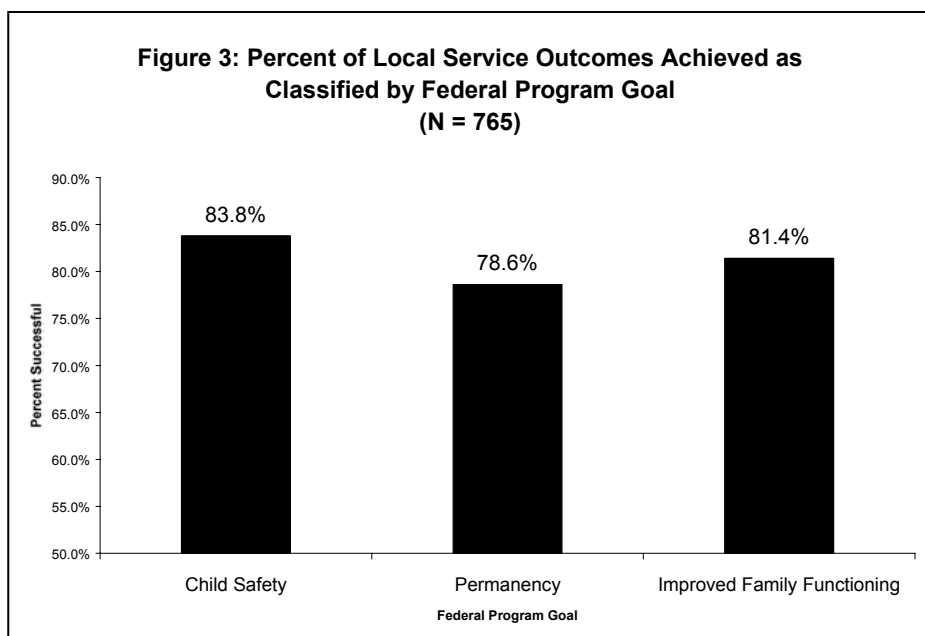
The federal program goals are the framework for a system to classify and help summarize the numerous and diverse SF/SC services and their local outcomes. As a 'package,' a service, its outcomes and measurable objectives, must address one of the three federal program goals.

Figure 2 shows the distribution of FY 2005 SF/SC Services classified by Federal Program Goal.

- 44.0% of services were classified Improved Family Functioning.
- 34.6% were classified Permanency.
- 21.4% were classified Child Safety.



For each service, the planned local outcomes and their data results are examined in relation to the targeted federal program goal. When the numerical objectives identified for service outcomes are met or surpassed, outcomes are achieved. The successful outcomes provide numerically measurable justification of progress towards targeted federal program goals. Figure 3 shows the percentage of Local Service Outcomes Achieved when classified by Federal Program Goal.



- **83.8%** of service outcomes targeting Child Safety were achieved.
- **78.6%** of service outcomes targeting Permanency were achieved.
- **81.4%** of service outcomes targeting Improved Family Functioning were achieved.