

2022 Randolph County Community Assessment Executive Summary

Children's Home Society, through its Institute for Family (IFF), received funds from the Randolph County Board of Commissioners to assess trends around family well-being and provide insights on how to reduce the rising pattern of kids in foster care in Randolph County. The process took place between January-July 2022 and included:



An analysis of population health and DSS data



An environmental scan of assets and opportunities



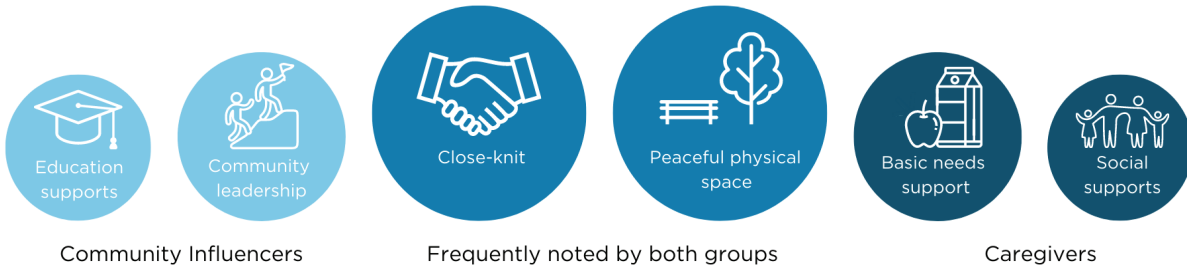
Over 100 resident interviews (81 caregivers and 26 community influencers)



Media analysis of stories about child maltreatment

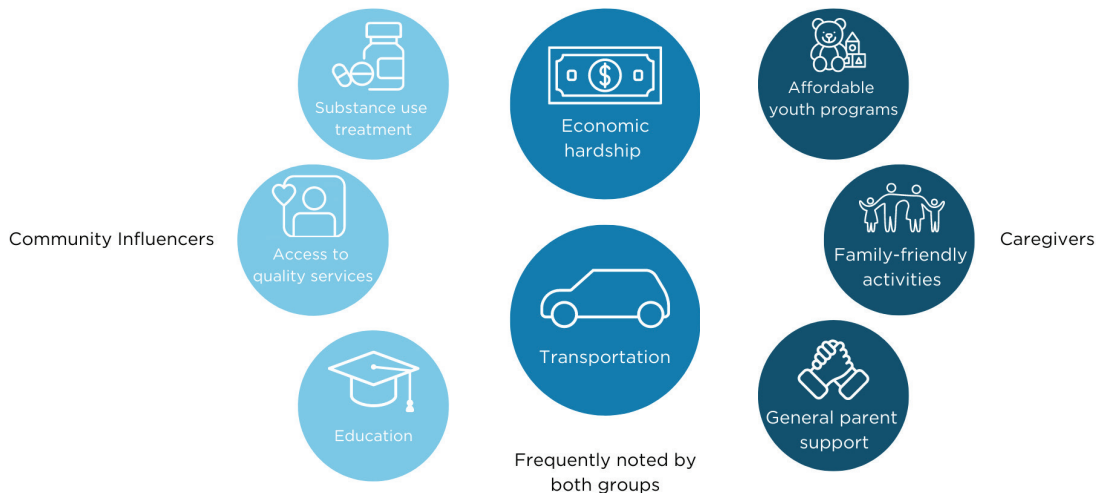
RESIDENTS NOTED MANY ASSETS IN RANDOLPH COUNTY

(n=79 parents, 17 community influencers)



RESIDENTS IDENTIFIED OPPORTUNITIES TO BETTER SUPPORT LOCAL FAMILIES

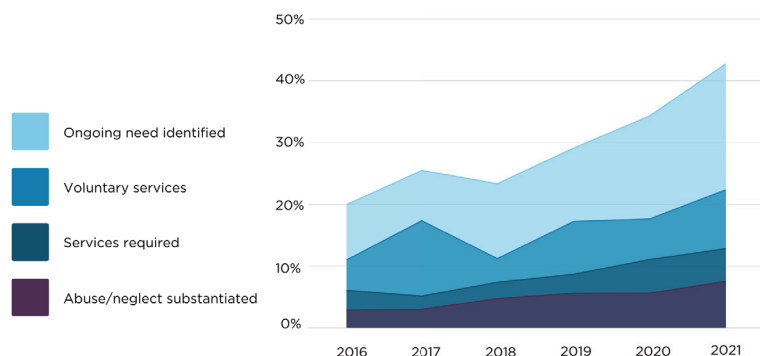
(n=79 parents, 17 community influencers)



STRESSORS THAT OVERBURDEN FAMILIES ARE INCREASING IN RANDOLPH COUNTY

Department of Social Services (DSS) Assessment findings show growing needs at every phase. For example, the proportion of families with needs/concerns identified has more than doubled and foster care rates are up 82% since 2016. Even with employment, caregivers consistently noted that they are struggling with transportation and meeting their most basic needs.

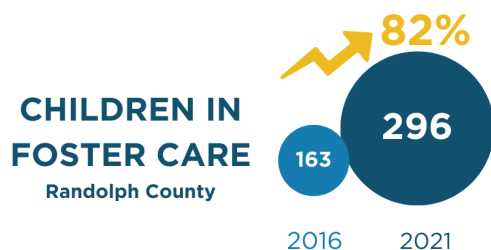
Percentage of total assessments with service needs or abuse/neglect substantiated (2016-2021)



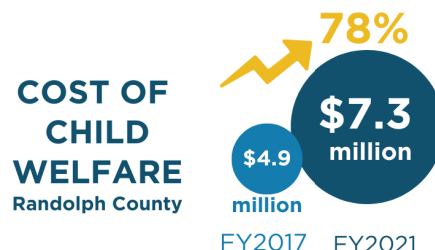
Families make too much to receive things like food stamps, but they still struggle because they do not make enough to get by.”

- Randolph County Caregiver

THE INCREASED PROPORTION OF FAMILIES WITH COMPLEX NEEDS IS DRIVING COSTS UP



*Compared to a 2% increase across North Carolina over this same time period



*Compared to a 5% increase in Medicaid over this same time period

TO BEGIN REDUCING THE NUMBER OF CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE, IFF RECOMMENDS:



Enhance relationships between overburdened caregivers and historical decision-makers.



Assess history to identify how past policies, practices, and investment patterns may link to present conditions.



Expand shared decision-making processes that include caregivers that are the most overburdened and co-create new solutions.



Prioritize resources in areas with lower community health and wellness scores.



Invest in addressing the economic hardships that families are experiencing and transportation needs.



Shift investments more upstream to prevent families from entering the child welfare system.



Support the digitization of DSS data to increase efficiency, information access, data-driven decisions, and ability to measure effectiveness.

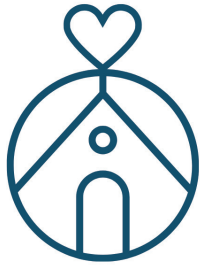


Build community awareness about factors that overburden families and how the community can help.

Everyone has a role in helping families thrive!

Here are ideas for how different sectors can help prevent child welfare involvement by proactively supporting family well-being.

FAITH-BASED COMMUNITIES



- Host a local support group for families that are overburdened.
- Donate school supplies and backpacks.
- Create peer led groups where people feel comfortable sharing their story.
- Offer spaces for local groups to meet and support each other.
- Create a “Parent Friends” network to reduce isolation for families.
- Collect and distribute items for basic needs.
- Provide free babysitting.
- Use church vehicles to help address transportation needs.
- Create a local version of the Faith Communities Coalition on Foster Care.
- Encourage members of your congregation to be potential foster/ adoptive parents, mentors, and respite care givers.

- Use predictable work schedules.
- Donate gently used items / quality food to families at the end of the day.
- Donate laptops and hotspots.
- Offer childcare stipends or onsite childcare to employees.
- Host give back days that involve donating a portion of the proceeds to organizations serving families.
- Provide paid family leave.
- Partner with community colleges or vocational programs to help employees access GED classes and certificate programs.
- Offer scholarships for summer camps, and recreational activities.

BUSINESS LEADERS



COMMUNITY MEMBERS



- Offer free babysitting.
- Host a block party.
- Reach out to families that may have different experiences than you for opportunities to connect and hear their stories.
- Offer your neighbors rides to your local grocery store.
- Donate to an initiative or program that helps families.
- Volunteer for local community groups and organizations.
- Take on a mentor position and teach people skills / trades such as plumbing, carpentry and automotive.
- Participate in community conversation that creates local solutions that improve family well-being.

GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS



- Provide safe spaces for families to talk about their ideas and experiences.
 - Create ways to have participatory decision-making around spending and policies.
 - Allocate funding and other resources towards strategies that improve family well-being.
 - Prioritize resources in areas that have lower community health and wellness scores.
 - Host a town hall meeting. Including local legislators, parent leaders, and other community leaders to discuss issues affecting local families.
 - Create a health fair that brings together local clinics and providers to offer free screenings as well as social service organizations who can talk about low-income health insurance options.
- Develop a human services fair. Invite partner organizations to present on topics that help parents meet their families' needs, such as finding adequate medical care, safe and affordable childcare, and substance use treatment.
 - Sponsor a job fair. Invite local businesses to attend and meet with prospective candidates as well as nonprofit organizations that can provide help with childcare, interview clothing or tips, transportation, and other job-related needs.
 - Shift public dollars more upstream to prevent DSS reports.
 - Promote community-friendly policies that improve the quality of life for residents and families.
 - Offer more rent subsidies for low-income residents along with tax incentives for property owners.
 - Fund and sustain family-oriented public facilities like skating rinks, community centers and swimming pools.

IDEAS FROM RANDOLPH COUNTY RESIDENTS

- Create more recreation areas for children and families.
- Provide some type of [public] transportation system that is readily available.
- Bring families of all races together to help get rid of the violence.
- Create entrepreneurship [opportunities] for minorities.
- Add walking tracks and swing sets to certain parts of Randolph.
- Create a community center in Randolph for children, youth, and families.
- Offer more recreational and after-school activities.
- Create more community things where people can get together...festivals with things that can help.
- Make the YMCA more affordable for families experiencing hardship.

SCHOOL OFFICIALS



- Host donation drives by encouraging families to give gently used basic needs items like clothing, sheets, dishes, etc.
- Incorporate student projects that solve community challenges.
- Include family leadership in decisions about school structure.
- Offer student internships for a class credit.
- Provide additional support for families through a family liaison or family support partner that supports parents as their children transition throughout the school year.