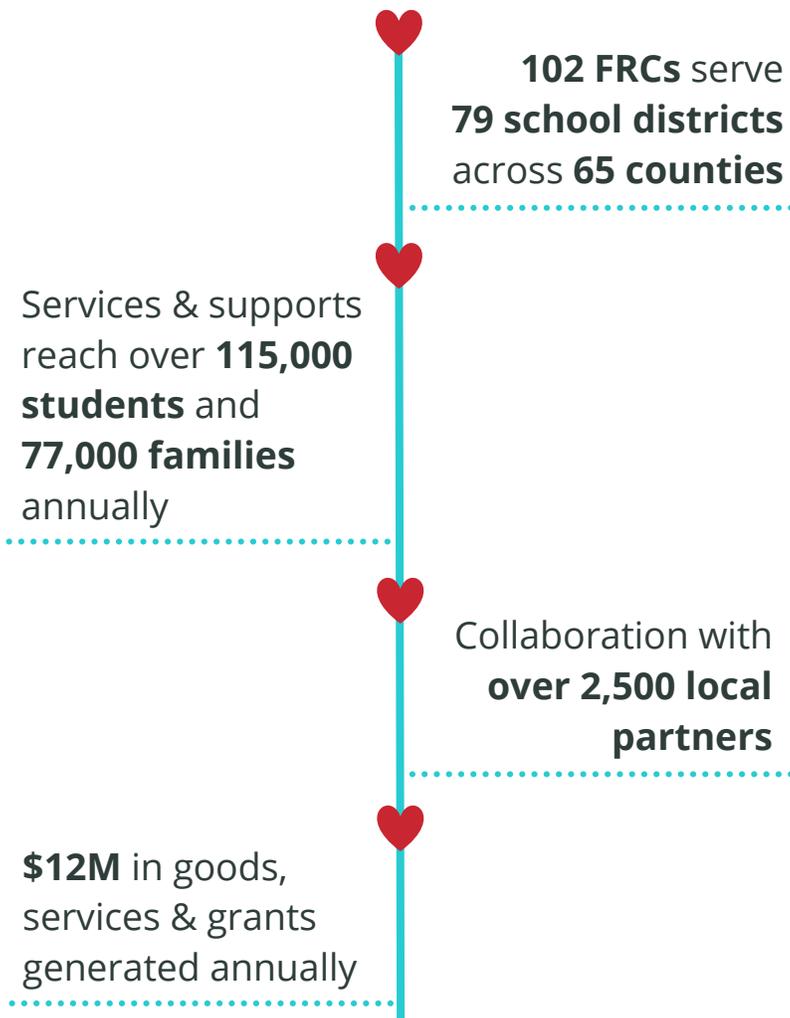




*Tennessee Family Resource Centers (FRCs) will lead efforts in whole child supports by serving as hubs for myriad mental health and social service supports within their school districts.*



**Tennessee FRCs will:**

- Engage** schools and community stakeholders to identify barriers hindering the social, personal, physical, and academic wellbeing of students.
- Empower** students and families by providing high-quality services.
- Evolve** as district leaders by serving as a hub of effective social service and mental health supports.

## General Information and History

In 1993, school-based Family Resource Centers were developed as specified in T.C.A. § 49-2-115 to address the potential risk factors within the home and community environments which impede or create barriers to a child's ability to learn and grow successfully. Potential risk factors include but are not limited to poverty, hunger, homelessness, abuse, neglect, poor health, mental illness, substance abuse and/or family conflict. Family Resource Centers network with community organizations to coordinate problem-solving and goal-setting processes with parents while assisting them to create a supportive environment and meet the needs of their children.

Service areas, as well as goals and implementation strategies, vary from center to center. In counties with sparse populations, a family resource center may serve all school communities within the county. In counties with increased densities, family resource centers are established to serve school communities in areas with high concentrations of historically underserved families.

The specific geographic location of each center is dependent upon accessibility and space availability. Most Family Resource Centers are located within K-12 grade school structures. Colocation in the school facility maximizes economies of function, and communication is enhanced between faculty and resource center staff by such physical proximity. The positive public perception of schools' stability increases community participation both in receiving assistance as well as volunteering to assist. Family Resource Centers may also be located in adult education centers, school system central offices, or subsidized housing developments.

Directors of Family Resource Centers are selected for their ability to implement the goals of the family resource center in which they serve. Directors vary in experience and professional training: some are former teachers, principals, social workers, teaching assistants, or nurses.

Family Resource Centers create close alliances with other state and federal programs to enhance all program areas. Many of the centers work in collaboration with adult basic education, Even Start, Title I preschool programs, Safe and Drug Free Schools, homeless education programs, Head Start and Families First. Operational activities are diverse in levels of complexity, coordination and sensitivity. Family Resource Centers serve as hubs providing a multitude of supports including but not limited to social and mental health supports, parenting skills, job skills, and personalized services to remove barriers.

A goal of Family Resource Centers is to maximize availability and reduce duplication of existing services. They work with families in a prevention or early intervention stage, allowing identified needs to be addressed by the appropriate agencies in an efficient and timely manner. To foster collaboration and increase access to services, centers partner with various entities such as the Department of Health, Department of Children's Services, Department of Human Services, UT Agricultural Extension Services, community mental health agencies, family and juvenile courts, Families First councils, public and private child and family service agencies, TennCare, churches, and community health agencies.



Family Resource Center funding is provided through grants awarded to school systems that have successfully responded to Requests for Proposals. Grantees receive a grant of **\$29,611.65** with a minimum local match of **\$20,388.35** per center. Family Resource Centers must file an annual report detailing goals, strategies and results, as well as a listing of their active Family Resource Center Advisory Council members.

The numbers of children and their families served by each center varies with the program components developed in response to need-driven goals. Therefore, those centers that have developed programs (i.e. early childhood development programs requiring daily contact with the same target population) will serve a smaller total number of clients, annually, than those centers that provide a more comprehensive continuum of short-term programs and services. The average number of clients served annually by any one center ranges anywhere from 100 to over 1,000.

For more information regarding the Family Resource Center (FRC) program in Tennessee, contact Taylor Rayfield, State Coordinator of Family Resource Centers, at [Taylor.Rayfield@tn.gov](mailto:Taylor.Rayfield@tn.gov) or (615) 483-1248.