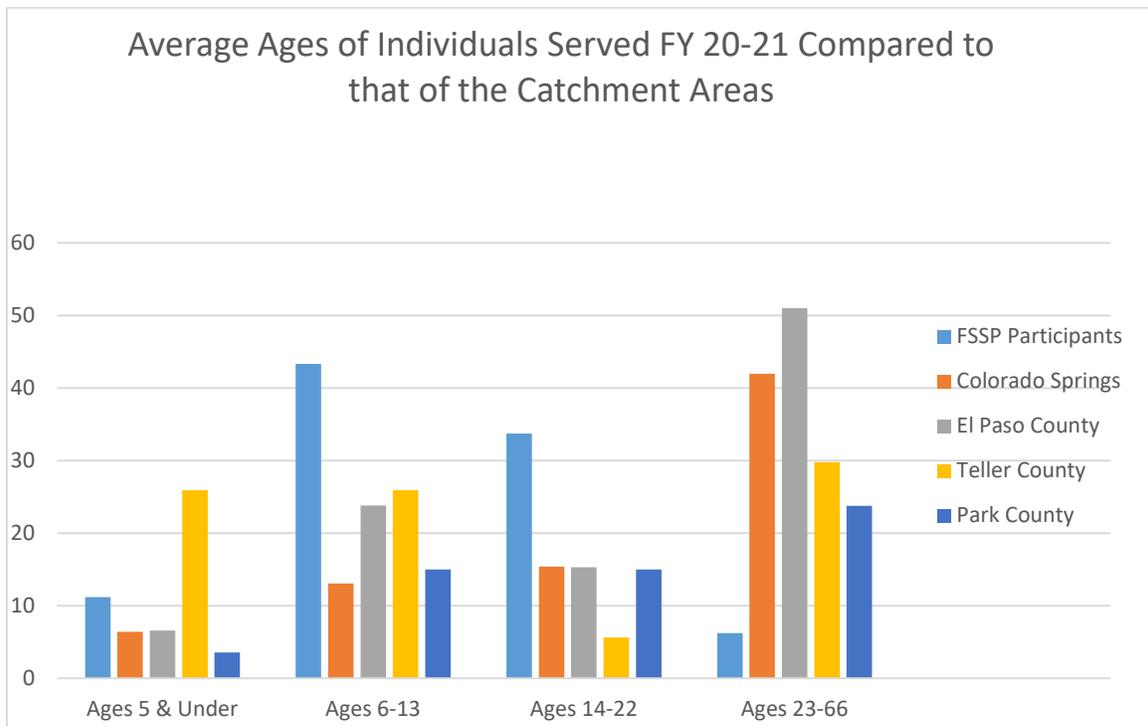




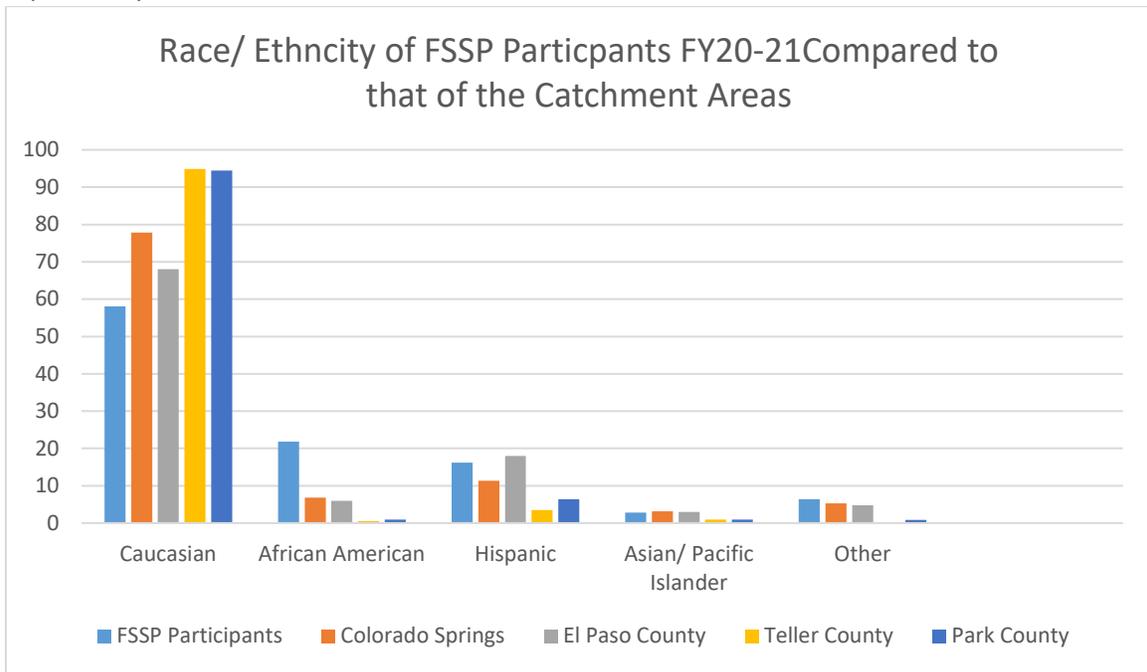
# The Resource Exchange Evaluation of the Effectiveness of the Family Supports and Services Program for FY 2020-2021

The Resource Exchange’s FSSP Program served 563 individuals during Fiscal Year 2020-2021. Individuals ages 2-67 were served during this fiscal year. The chart below compares the age of participants within the TRE FSSP Program to the population in each of counties in TRE’s catchment area. Most of the individuals served were under the age of 23 (92%). The decline in numbers served after the age of 23 is primarily related to availability of and access to Adult HCBS supports.



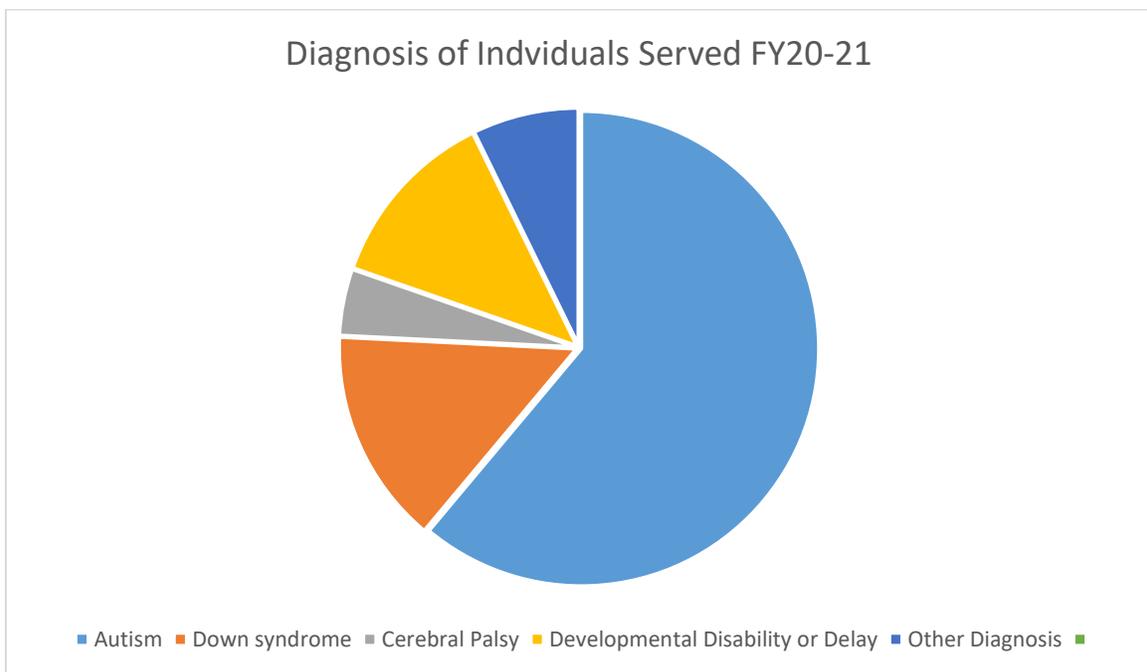
Data compiled from the Colorado Springs Chamber of Commerce for Colorado Springs, El Paso and Teller Counties, November 2019 and the US Census Bureau.

As shown in the next chart, the distribution of race and ethnicity of FSSP participants during Fiscal Year 2017-2018 averaged comparatively with that of the catchment areas served.



Data compiled from the Colorado Springs Chamber of Commerce for Colorado Springs, El Paso and Teller Counties, November 2019, and the US Census Bureau

As shown in the chart below 52% of the individuals served by FSSP in FY 2020-21 had an Autism diagnosis. Down Syndrome, Cerebral Palsy and Developmental Disability were the next most prevalent diagnoses among FSSP participants.



TRE FSSP invests heavily in partnerships with a variety of community agencies, programs, and services. These partnerships allow Family Support Coordinators to inform families of resources and assist in the connections to these resources based on family priorities. These partnerships include:

- Educational Supports - The Arc of the Pikes Peak Region and the Peak Parent Center
- Guardianship and Other Advocacy - The Arc of the Pikes Peak Region
- Transition Supports and IEP Needs – 17 School Districts across El Paso, Park and Teller counties and the Pikes Peak Inter Agency Transition team.
- Medical Needs and Supports – Community Health Care Alliance (RAE) and El Paso County Department of Health, HCP Program
- Mental Health Needs and Supports – Community Health Care Alliance (RAE) Diverus Health and a variety of community behavioral and mental health care providers.
- Departments of Human Services and the Collaborative Management Program (CMP) in all 3 counties
- Park and Teller County Collaborations - Community Partnership Family Resource Center (Teller) and Mountain Resource Center (Park). Teller and Park counties FSSP Staff also work very closely with local DHS offices, and the Collaborative Management Program (CMP) – HB 1451 group, Families and Communities Together (FACT), Aspen Mine Center and Community of Caring, and CCHA.
- Recreation and Physical Health - YMCA of the Pikes Peak Region, City of Colorado Springs Therapeutic Recreation Program, Special Olympics, and Tae Kwon Do.

TRE FSSP has responded to feedback from families and the FSSP Council in creating a variety of activities that benefit multiple families within the FSSP program and other TRE departments.

1. In March of 2021 TRE's FSSP partnered with The ARC of the Pikes Peak Region to create a resource library for FSSP families and the community at large. This library is housed and staffed at the ARC PPR. The library includes traditional resource library items such as educational books, videos, tablets, adaptive equipment, and bikes that are available to be checked and taken home by families to try out. The library also is comprised of adaptive computer and kitchen equipment and sensory items to try out at the ARC before purchasing or pursuing funding for similar items. Items to furnish the library were provided with FSSP funding and FSSP families will receive priority for checking out items and use of the items available there. Families can reserve a time to try out computer equipment, cook a meal in the kitchen with adaptive equipment or try out larger sensory equipment there.
2. In 2015 a Resource Navigation Position was created to coordinate and manage a database of local resources in order to enhance access for families and service coordinators to information and improve connections for families in times of need. The database is maintained and accessible on the TRE website and updated regularly. The Resource Navigator is also available to families to answer any questions regarding resources and assist families in locating resources for more specific needs including those families on the waiting list.
3. Break Time Respite Program has been operated at TRE for more than 15 years, providing respite opportunities to families of children 3 months to 21 years of age with special needs/developmental disabilities and their sibling's. The program is staffed by a Coordinator, Behavior Specialist, Nurse, and community volunteers and is supplemented with grant funding. The Break Time Coordinator has engaged many community partners such as The United States Air Force Academy; University of Colorado, Colorado Springs Bethel College of Nursing; Colorado College Education Department; and Pikes Peak Community College Early Education Department; El Paso County Sherriff's Office; Colorado Springs Police Department; Colorado Springs Fire Department to build a pool of volunteers matched one-on-one with children attending to ensure a fun and safe experience for all. Average participation per session is 25-40 children. Break Sessions are held 3 times a month. Break Time was on hiatus during FY 20-21 du to the COVID 19 Pandemic but resumed operations in June of 2021. A Family Fun event was held then aw a kickoff event to welcome families back to the program. 94 individuals attended this event which included family activities, lunch, volunteers to help facilitate the event and medical and behavioral staff in attendance. Staff worked throughout the fiscal year to communicate with families about respite needs and their readiness to reengage in Break Time sessions.
4. Positive Solutions for Family (PSFF) is a 7-week training to assist parents of children up to 8 years of age in developing positive social and emotional skills for their children and to assist parents in understanding problem behaviors and in developing strategies to manage those behaviors. This program is a partnership with local churches, the early childhood council, Lutheran Family Services, and other community agencies and is delivered

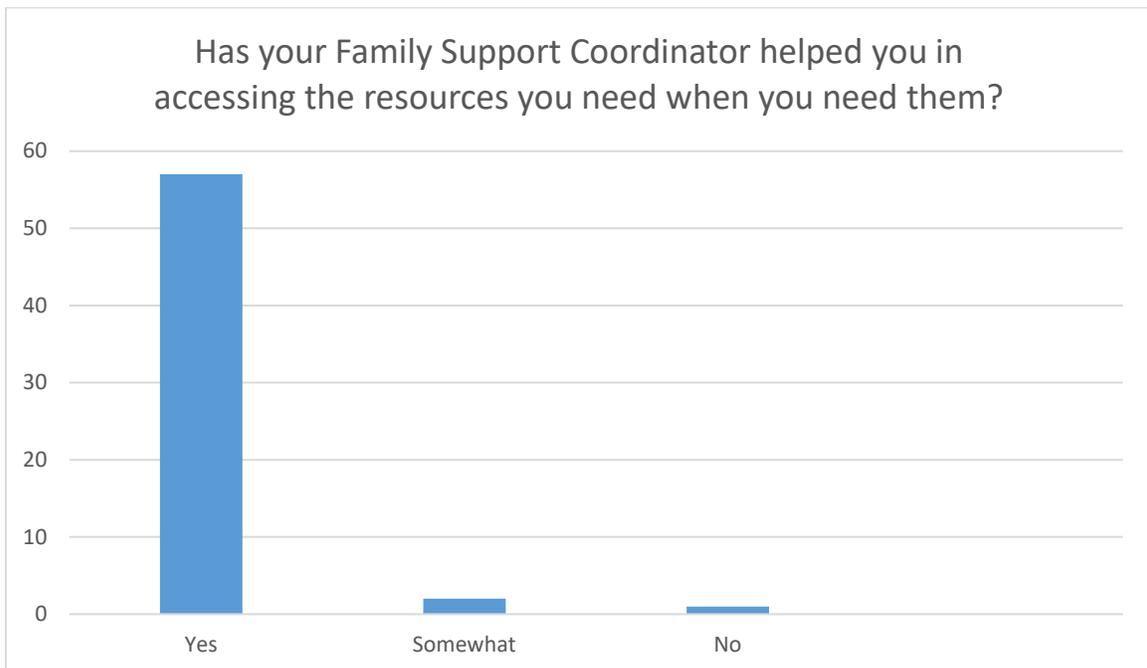
6-8 times per year. FSSP funded a trainer for this event during FY20-21 who facilitated 2 complete trainings sessions with 24 parents in attendance across both training sessions.

In the spring of 2021 TRE conducted Customer Satisfaction Surveys with all families who were enrolled in the program at that time. 60 families responded the survey. The results provided below indicate a continued overwhelming satisfaction of families with the services they received through FSSP. In addition, this information will continue to guide program development and ongoing improvement.



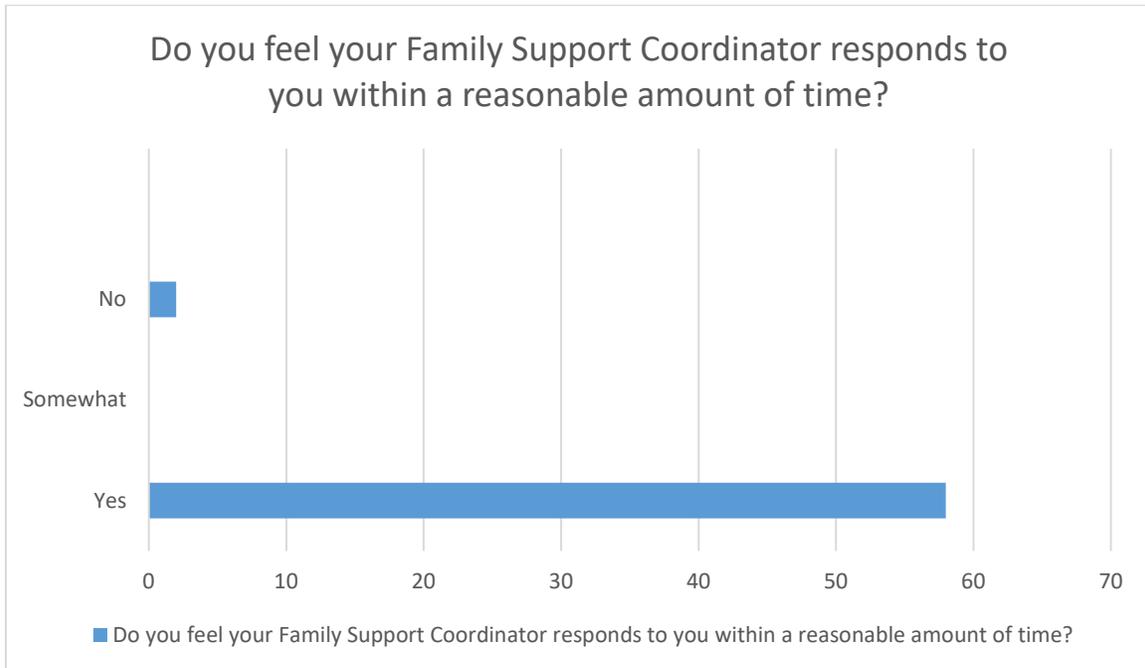
Some of the comments received regarding this question included:

- *Our resource coordinator has been very knowledgeable in providing necessary information and help.*
  - *Easy to reach/contact, and amazing support!*
- *Our Family Support Coordinator has been fantastic to answer any questions we have. I can email her and know within a day or two I can get an answer.*



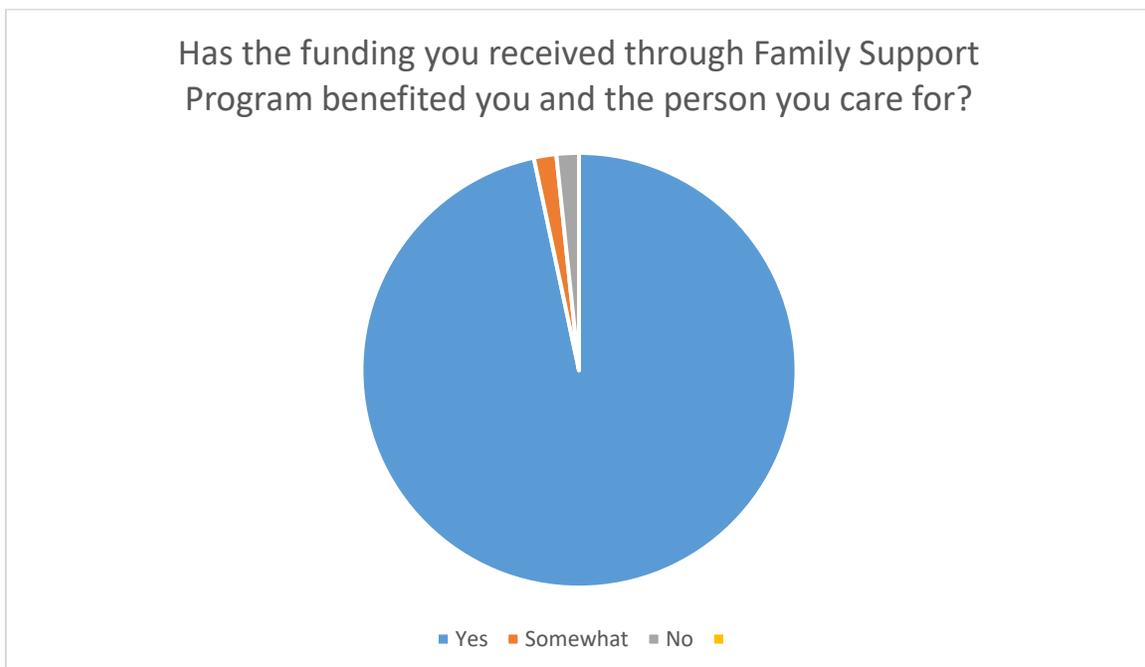
Some of the comments received regarding this question included:

- *My Family Support Coordinator helps me to find resources for my kids one of the situation was in school with the IEP program for my son the school was not doing the right thing to help my son so she found a way to help my son to be reevaluate again but the results was the same I didn't give up and she was by my side to help me to find more help.*
  - *She has shown us different ideas on how to help the whole family*
  - *Very knowledgeable or finds the answers in a timely manner.*



Some of the comments received regarding this question included:

- *She always reminds me with time ahead with we have meetings or things to renew.*
  - *Our coordinator is very prompt in responding to my inquiries.*
  - *Our Family Support Coordinator is amazing!*



Some of the comments received regarding this question included:

- *It has helped my sanity*

- *We were able to access a bike with pedal assist which has allowed my son to ride more, improved his overall mood while out and about, and he's actually been able to drop a few pounds which has helped him feel more confident!*
- *Yes! Yes! Yes! My husband, Steven's father, tested positive for Covid on May 3rd and has been hospitalized since May 11th (50 days!). He has been seriously ill for many weeks and now has a Covid version of a terminal lung disease called Interstitial Lung Disease as well as heart issues. Receiving respite care for Steven has been a life saver during this difficult time! I have needed to be at the hospital a few hours each day and knowing Steven is well cared for has been such a tremendous help. We are so grateful!*
- *We're so very thankful for this program and the funds that were made available to us. Our son is autistic however we do not qualify for Medicaid or social security benefits so what we receive from this program allows us to pay for some of his services. Thank you so so much.*



Some of the comments received regarding this question included:

- *Yes our coordinator gives us so much support and helps us understand what TRE can provide.*
- *She always remind me that they have support for our family and she offers me since we are in the program.*
  - *She is great at providing information*

The last question of the customer satisfaction survey asks: What support would be helpful that you Family Support Coordinator does not provide or what recommendations would you have for the Family Support Program? Suggestions from the respondents included:

- *The ability to find our special need person a job within his mountain community.*
- *I would Love the support services will approve resources for places like the zoo, aquarium and recreation places. There is money available but not all the time approved for thing that can enjoy.*
- *Some products that are provided by Medicaid are inferior quality and do not function appropriately. Family support should take that into account so a usable alternative is not creating a financial burden to the family.*
- *More options, besides YMCA, for membership access to organizations that have swimming pools. Kids lose access to their neighborhood peers when they only have access to YMCA pools which may not be their local peer location.*
- *Free zoo memberships for families*
- *To have the Zoo memberships again*

TRE's Family Support Council has prioritized the need for case coordination and support for the families we serve and ongoing assistance in helping connect families to the resources they need in the community above and beyond the defined case management activities of the program. The changes to the way the FSSP program is funded in 2020 have negatively impacted the program's ability to provide the quality of service coordination that has long been a priority of TRE's Family

Support Council. The current funding for Service Coordination Services does not fully support the quality-of-service coordination (such as in person visits) that our program has long provided or the administrative needs to operate the program of this size.

Family Support Coordinators worked to identify and connect families to available resources in all the direct service areas:

- **Assistive Technology:** FSC's coordinated families and therapist to obtain needed documentation to assist family in gaining assistive devices. TRE partnered with the ARC of the Pikes Peak Region to create a resource library which has adaptive equipment such as bikes, computer equipment, adaptive kitchen equipment and adaptive gardening equipment available for family to either check out or try out at our newly created resource library.
- **Environmental Engineering-** FSCs assisted families in accessing resources for modification to their homes and vehicles such as Friends of Man and programs through the Independence Center.
- **Medical/ Dental-** FSCs have assisted families in using their FSSP funding to access medical care and items not covered by insurance. FSC's have connected families with the El Paso CO HCP program to help coordinate the extensive medical and therapy needs that many of the individuals FSSP serves has. As part as the Resource Library FSSP has stocked diapers, pull ups and wipes for emergency needs experienced by families.
- **Other Services:**
  - **Consultation-** Throughout the fiscal year FSCs have supported families by attending IEP meetings with parents to provide advocacy and support and have also referred them to The ARC of the Pikes Peak Region and Peak Parent for more formal advocacy and assistance when needed. FSCs also provided advocacy and support for other education needs such as truancy. During the transition period for an individual, FSCs made referrals to The ARC for guardianship, when necessary, assisted families in understanding and starting the referral process to access adult services and assisted in identifying and choosing transition programs. FSCs assisted families in applying for needed public benefits and Social Security as well as provided advocacy and support on the family's behalf through these processes. FSCs often assisted families facing housing crises by connecting them with homeless and housing resources. May FSCs participate in Wrap Around meeting with local partner agencies to ensure that all the family's needs are being met and they are connected to needed community resources.
  - **Recreational Needs-** TRE's FSSP has built a strong relationship with the YMCA of the Pikes Peak Region. FSCs continued to assist families in accessing memberships as well as many of the programs and activities offered by the YMCA such as swimming lessons, basketball, and soccer and summer camps. Families report many benefits of being able to access a YMCA membership with FSSP Funding such as the health benefits, respite, and stress relief and it remains a one of the most requested uses of funding among FSSP Families. FSSP Families were also connected to community centers in their neighborhoods.

Tre's Community Engagement Team raised over \$3000 during their annual Giving Tuesday Campaign in November 2020 to purchase memberships to community recreation sites for FSSP Families. 18 Cheyenne Zoo Memberships, Denver Aquarium and Denver Museum of Nature and Science memberships were able to be purchased with the funding.

Families were also connected with and used recreational opportunities through a variety of local programs, such as the City of Colorado Springs Therapeutic Recreation Program and Special Olympics, In Park and Teller Counties the Woodland Park Aquatic Center, Evergreen and South Park Recreations Centers were also utilized for recreational needs.
- **Parent and Sibling Support-** FSCs referred and connected families to the Positive Solutions for Families during this fiscal year. FSCs assisted families in coordinating access to information and funds so that they could attend educational conferences such as the Peak Parent Conference and the national Down Syndrome Association conference. FSCs have also connected families with local Sibshops to further support the sibling of the individuals we serve. The newly created resource library also contains educational books (in both written and audio formats) and videos covering a wide range of topics for family to check out and use.
- **Professional Services-** FSCs assisted families in accessing needed therapies such as Speech, OT, Therapeutic Riding and ABA therapy based on an individual's needs. FSCs sometimes accompanied families in touring ABA facilities and provided support to them in selection of the provider that matched the family's needs. FSCs also

coordinated with therapists to obtain letters of recommendation for needed items to facilitate therapy when the family utilized their FSSP funding for items such as sensory tools, weighted blankets, vests, and other therapeutic equipment. The resource library also has frequently recommended therapeutic equipment and sensory items available in for families to check out or try on sight.

- **Respite-** FSCs have coordinated and assisted families in using a variety of respite resources within the community. Families have utilized Zach's Place, Pike Peak Respite, and TRE's Break Time respite program, as well as choosing, their own providers to provide respite. FSCs also assisted families in utilizing camps as respite opportunities such as Colorado Lions Camp, Discovery and Teen Scope camps through the Colorado Springs Therapeutic Recreation Department, athletic camps and church camps. Families have also been assisted in accessing respite vouchers through the Colorado Respite Coalition.
- **Transportation-** Families were assisted this year in utilizing Medicaid transportation providers and public transit options when appropriate. In Park and Teller Counties this year FSSP staff has worked with the City of Cripple Creek Transportation department, Aspen Mine Center and the local Senior Center to discuss transportation issues and work on a plan for families in the future to have more options and better access to transportation.

The FSSP waiting list was eliminated during FY 20-21 due to increased funding received from the state. The program was also able to serve all individuals referred to program during this fiscal year.

As TRE's FSSP program looks to the future, feedback from families and from the FSSP Council have prioritized a continuation of existing supports in addition to the following:

- Ensuring families in our rural areas can access the services and supports they need.
- Supporting increased access to quality respite care in all areas, which is the most requested service from families.
- Behavioral supports for children and young adults, particularly highly aggressive teenage boys
- Access to recreational opportunities for the entire family. The limitation placed around providing funding for family recreation with the 2019 FSSP rule change has created a huge gap in addressing that need for the families served by FSSP. This continues to be one of the most requested services. When funds were raised from donors to provide these memberships the program had 155 families sign up in under 30 min and was only able to provide 18 memberships with the raised funds.
- Access to transportation for needs such as getting to employment for individuals served, respite and recreational opportunities. FSSP funding for transportation is limited to transportation to and from medical and therapy appts and many families have transportation needs related to the disabilities that go beyond those type appointments. This is particularly challenging for families in the rural communities TRE serves.