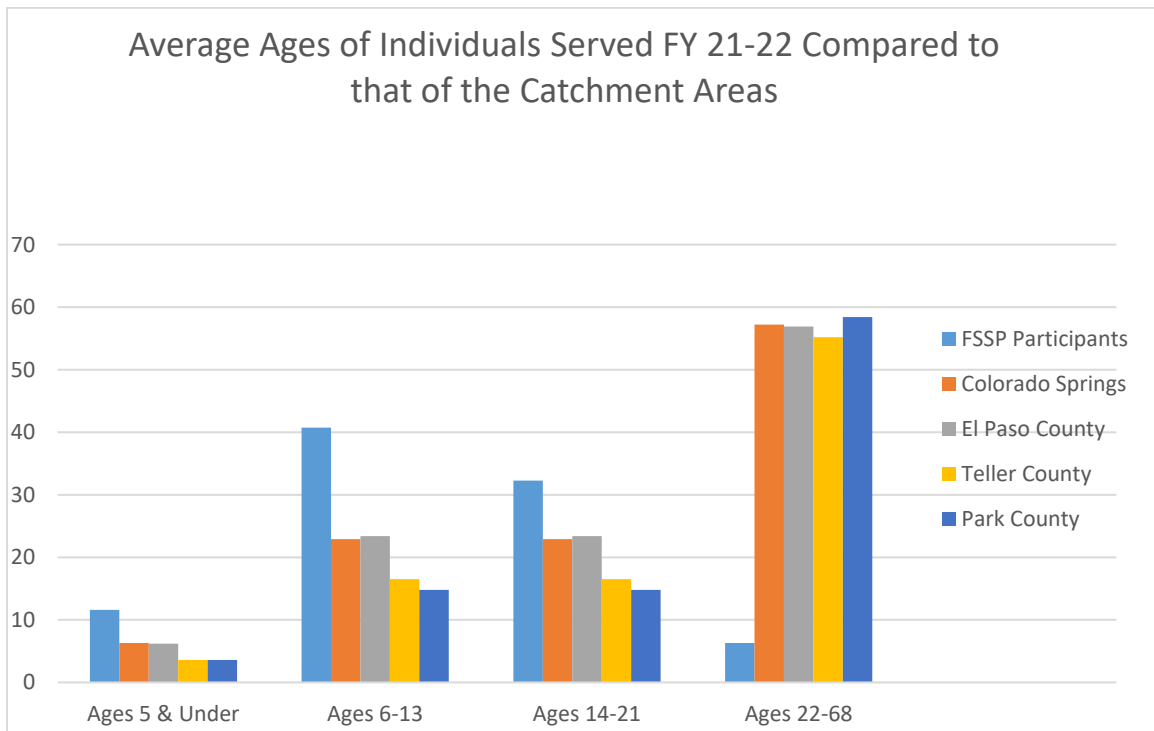




The Resource Exchange Evaluation of the Effectiveness of the Family Supports and Services Program

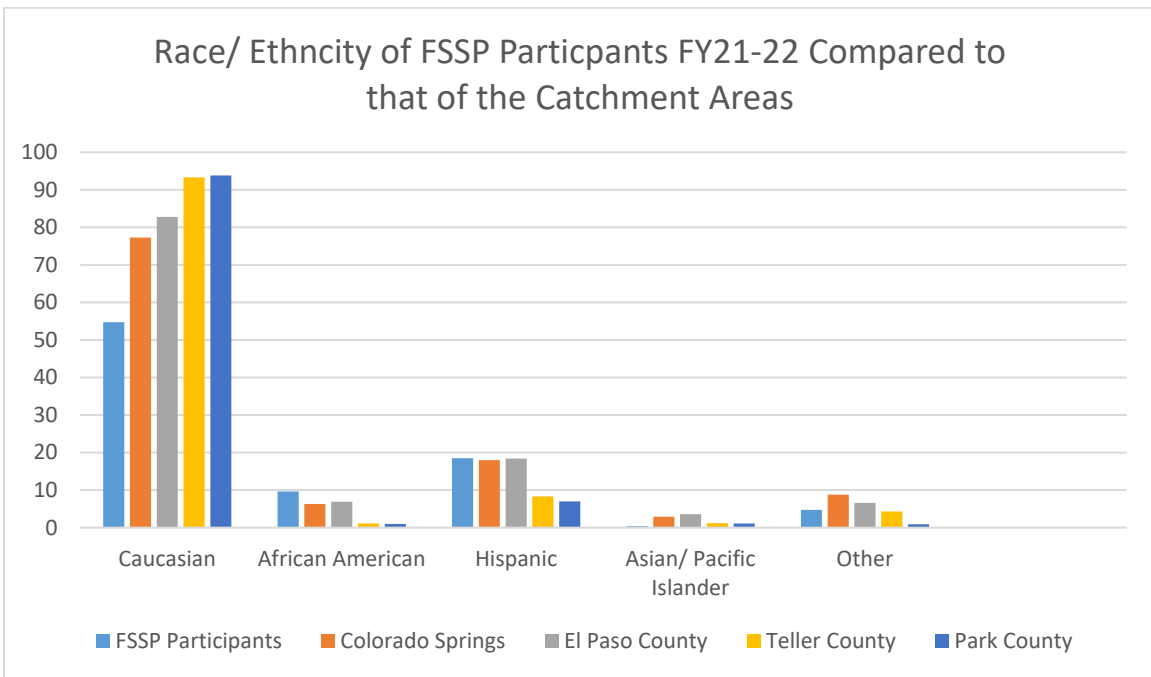
for FY 2021-2022

The Resource Exchange’s FSSP Program served 508 individuals during Fiscal Year 2021-2022. Individuals ages 2-68 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 21 (88%). The decline in numbers served after the age of 22 is primarily related to availability of and access to Adult HCBS supports.



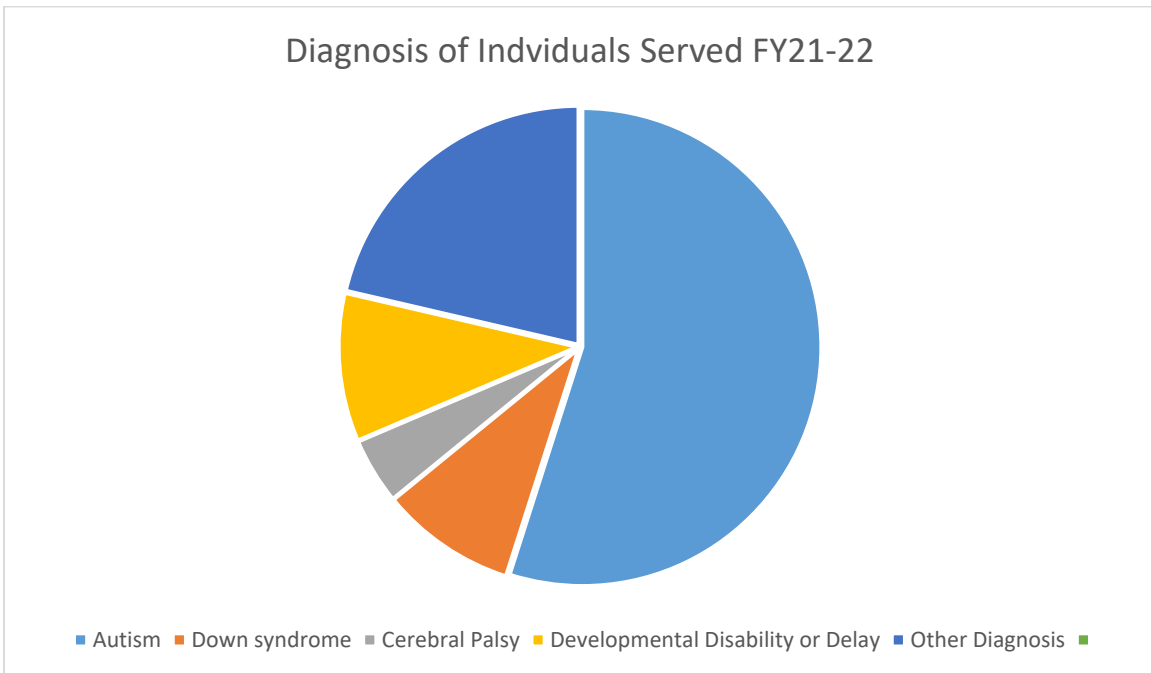
Data compiled from census.gov July 2021 data

As shown in the next chart, the distribution of race and ethnicity of FSSP participants during Fiscal Year 2021-2022 averaged comparatively with that of the catchment areas served.



Data compiled from census.gov July 2021 data

As shown in the chart below Autism continued to be the most prevalent diagnosis among individuals served by TRE's FSSP in FY21-22 with over 50% of individuals having that 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 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, 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. TRE's FSSP has continued its partnership with The ARC of the Pikes Peak Region of 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 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. The Resource Navigation Position was continued throughout the year to coordinate and manage a database of local resources 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.
3. In FY 21-22 TRE expanded its respite programming to include 2 new programs: Cooking Club and Gathering Time. All 3 programs are staffed by a Respite Specialist, 1 Respite Assistant, 2 Behavior Specialists, a medical professional, and community volunteers. The Respite Specialist has engaged many community partners such as The United States Air Force Academy; University of Colorado, Colorado Springs; Co, and the El Paso County Sheriff's in volunteering for these programs.
 - **Break Time** provided respite opportunities to families of children 3 months to 21 years of age with special needs/developmental disabilities and their sibling's and returned to normal operations in July 2021 after being on hiatus due to the pandemic. Break Time reduced sessions to 2 times a month, 1 Friday night and 1 Saturday afternoon, as not all families were ready to return to group respite options. Volunteers were matched one-on-one with children attending to ensure a fun and safe experience for all. 140 individuals were served by Break Time during this year. In June the 2nd Annual Family Fun event was held at a local park with 65 individuals in attendance. This event included family activities, lunch, volunteers to help facilitate the event and medical and behavioral staff in attendance.
 - **Cooking Club** began in September 2021 and occurs quarterly at The Arc Pikes Peak Region. Cooking Club utilizes the adaptive kitchen at the ARC to teach cooking skills to preteens and teens while offering respite to their families. Participants have learned to cook spaghetti, pizza, soup, and quesadillas this year. Current Cooking Club enrollment is 15.
 - **Gathering Time** is TRE's newest respite program offering respite to you adults ages 18-35 years old with IDD diagnosis. Gathering Time was created and began in January 2022 in response to the requested need of more respite options for adults. Gathering time is held 1 Friday night a month at the ARC Pikes Peak Region and is currently serving 11 young adults and their families. Each event has a theme with

activities and dinner encompassing those themes. Themes this year have included Chinese New Year, St. Patrick's Day, and Superheroes.

In the spring of 2022 TRE conducted Customer Satisfaction Surveys with all families who were enrolled in the program at that time. 67 families responded the survey. The results provided below indicate a continued overwhelming satisfaction of families with the services they received through FSSP while also indicating clear areas for improvement, in both the information we provide about FSSP funding and information regarding resources. This information will continue to guide program development and ongoing improvement.



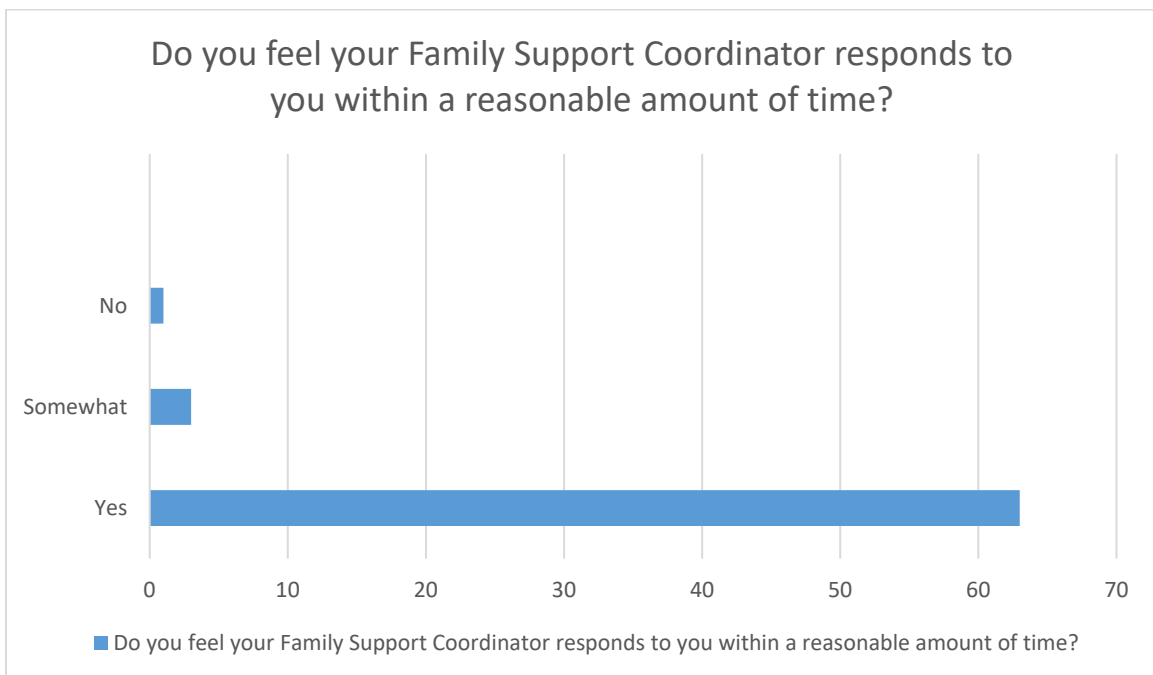
Some of the comments received regarding this question included:

- *Our Family Support Coordinator has always been very helpful and explains everything to me and answers all of my requests in a timely manner. She is a very nice lady and is very pleasant to talk with. She is very knowledgeable about her job, and I can always reach her if needed.*
 - *She is excellent! She makes it easy for me and that's exactly what I need.*
- *My Family Support Coordinator is great. She explained all the help Resource Exchange could supply my family with. She always checks in to make sure my family is well.*



Some of the comments received regarding this question included:

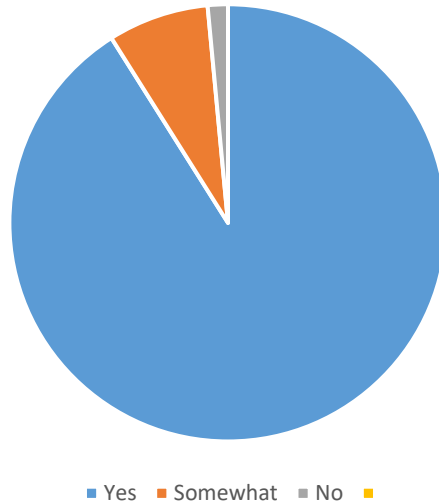
- *When Maxim was not able to find evening care for my son, I was able to get respite to hire a couple of people to help for a couple of months.*
- *Thanks for everything you do and for always following up. I know I can count on you!*
- *She is at the top of her game on presenting resources to us.*



Some of the comments received regarding this question included:

- *Always gets right back to me the next day.*
- *She is answers extremely quick! Within a few hours the longest it has been is the very next day.*
- *In spite of the many clients I'm assuming she has and life's many changes we're all experiencing today, I'll say, I receive responses fairly quickly.*

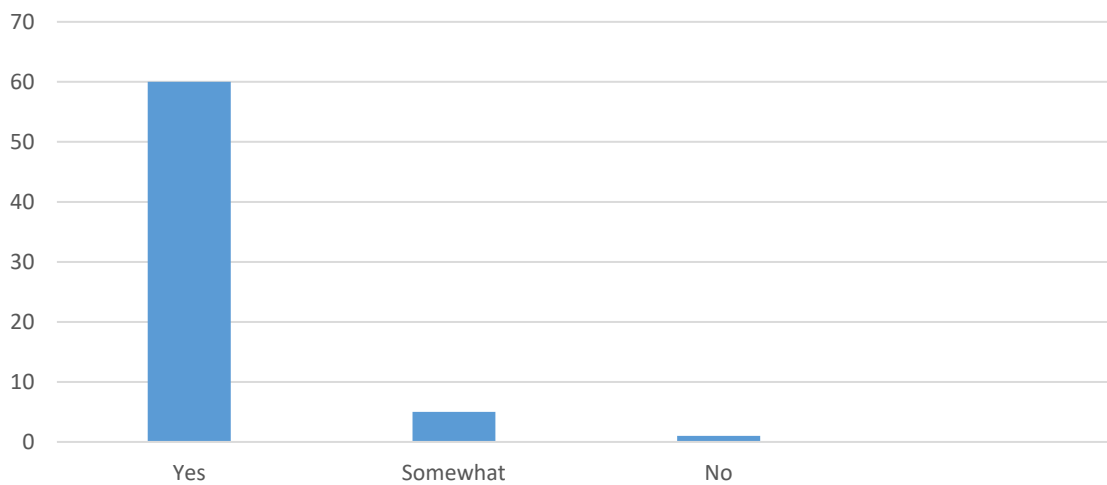
Has the funding you received through Family Support Program benefited you and the person you care for?



Some of the comments received regarding this question included:

- *Yes and no,, it seems that the grant money for TRE, is limited with restrictions. For instance, my daughter cannot tolerate the group functions paid for TRE, but there are other needs that my daughter could use the \$ for and was denied because it wasn't in their list of supports. If a child has special needs, its called special needs for a reason.. TRE needs to expand their \$ when a family is in need, NOT to what "they" deem is necessary.*
- *We could not have equine therapy one day a week if were not for the financial assistance*
- *using the FSP funds for respite breaks has been helpful*
- *Very limited items covered, unable to use full funding amount as it is hard to get items covered and get letters for needs*
- *Being a part of the "TRE" program is a benefit within itself. It's amazing.*

Has your Family Support Coordinator helped you understand the possible supports and services TRE can provide and how to access them when needed?



Some of the comments received regarding this question included:

- *The information given to me is very accurately introduced to me.*
- *Is very good about making sure we understand timelines and resources available.*
- *Yes, always informs me of new opportunities for support services*

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:

- *Since I am required to answer this and not leave it blank I would have to say more flexibility on what equipment can be purchased*
- *I would like to know exactly what can be funded and have more conversations about it, seems our family will not be able to benefit from this program due to the limitations.*
- *More suggestions on how funds can be used. I would love to see more available respite care in the north area I know she can't make respite care but wanted to suggest it.*
- *Newsletters, I do receive emails with opportunities*
- *To support teens that have autism not just kids and the funds are so restricted therefore we cannot even use them*
- *We are so grateful for the funding we receive - and, unfortunately, we often find the funding does not cover expenses we would love to have covered (e.g. nutritional supplements).*
- *Make it easier for families to request equipment and supplies by not requiring a therapist letter.*
- *I would love to see zoo memberships covered again!*

To respond to the suggestions made by families in the Customer Service Survey a FSSP guide to funding document was developed to help families navigate the complexities for FSSP Funding. This document provides an overview about how FSSP funding works, details of each funding category, a list of things FSSP cannot fund and TRE's FSSP Emergency Funding Criteria. The document will be given to and reviewed with families annually. A quarterly newsletter is being developed by the FSSP Resource Navigation Coordinator to be sent to families with local resources and events.

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 current methods of funding for FSSP have continued to negatively impact 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 does not fully support activities such as in person visits and the need for high caseloads to maximize revenue do allow enough time to adequately address the needs of the families served or provide the level of service that has been the standard for TRE's FSSP and the families served have come to expect. The current methods of funding also do not provide adequately for 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 continued to partner with the ARC of the Pikes Peak Region to operate 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 the Arc Pikes Peak Region.
- **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 as well as securing the needed documentation to utilize FSSP funds for those needs.
- **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 and Peak Vista Coordinators 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. Many 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 recreation centers in their neighborhoods.

Tre's Community Engagement Team secured a \$10,000 Grant from the Pikes Peak United Way, \$5000 of which was designated for FSSP families of children under age 8 to receive memberships to community recreation sites such as the Cheyenne Mountain Zoo, Denver Aquarium and the Denver Museum of Nature and Science.

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 assisted families in coordinating access to information and funds so that they could attend educational conferences such as the Peak Parent Conference. FSCs have also connected families with local Sibshops to further support the sibling of the individuals we serve. The 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 for their education and additional support.
- **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 houses 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, Gathering Time and Cooking Club respite programs, 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.

TRE's FSSP able to serve all individuals referred to program during this fiscal year without need for a waiting list.

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.
- Ensuring families understand FSSP funding and what is needed to access those funds for their family member.
- Supporting continued 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. FSSP staff continue to partner with TRE's Community Engagement Team to identify and pursue additional grant resources for recreational activities for FSSP families.
- 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 and low-income families without any means of transportation.