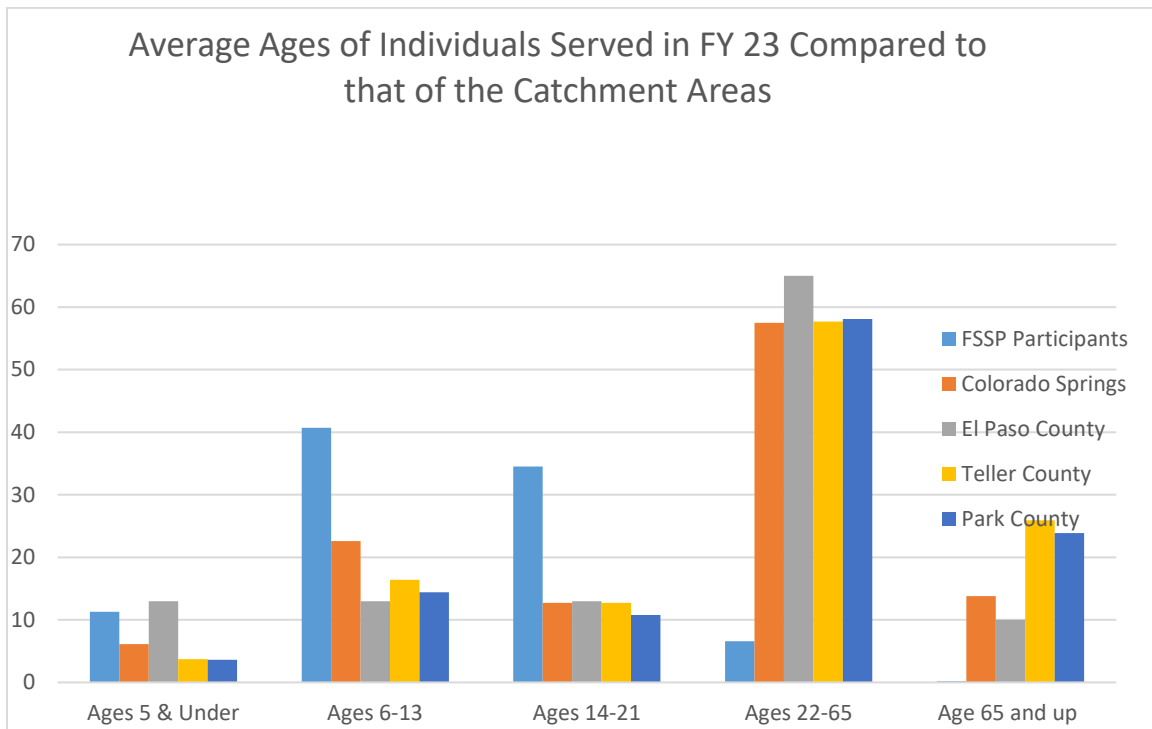




The Resource Exchange Evaluation of the Effectiveness of the Family Supports and Services Program for FY 2022-2023

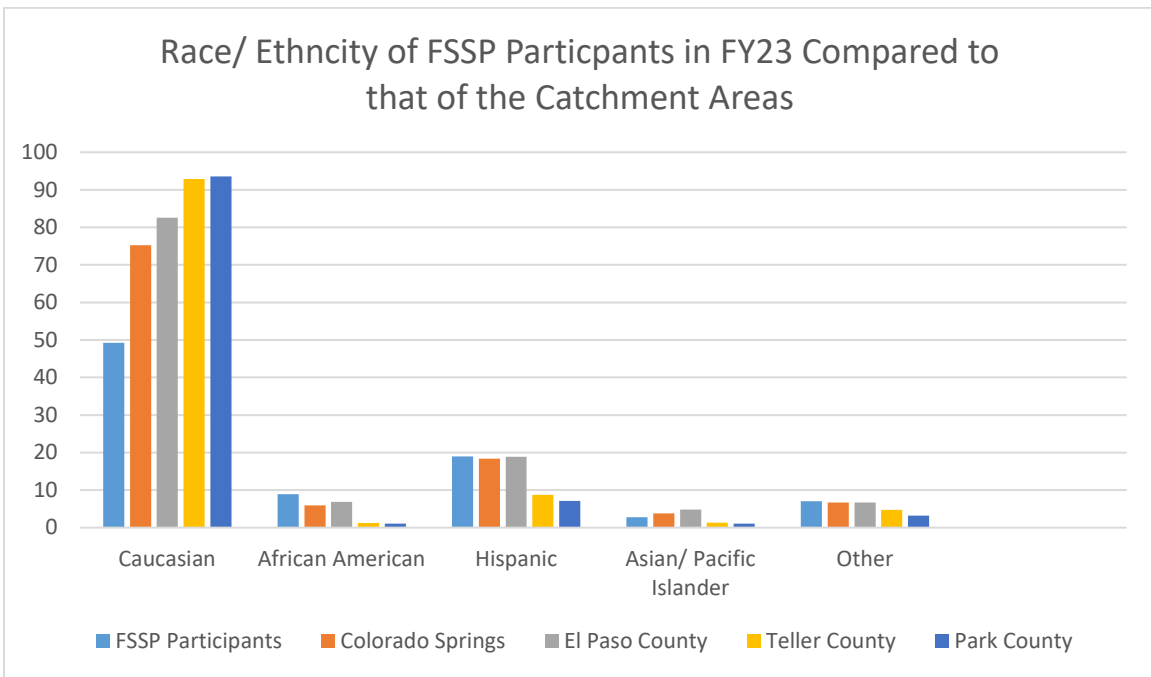
The Resource Exchange’s FSSP Program served 469 individuals, ages 2-69, during Fiscal Year 2023.

The chart below compares the age of participants within the TRE FSSP Program to the population in each of the counties in TRE’s catchment area. Most individuals served were under the age of 21 (86%) due to the availability of HCBS waiver support after age 18.



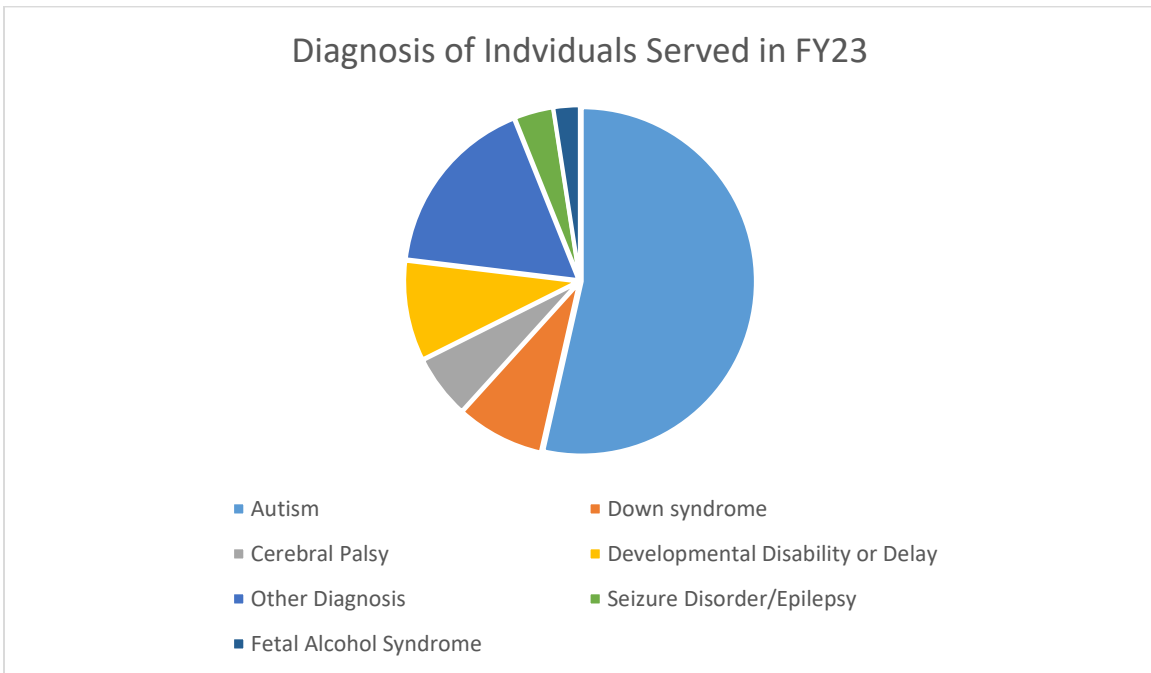
Data compiled from census.gov July 2022 data.

As shown in the next chart, the distribution of race and ethnicity of FSSP participants during Fiscal Year 23 once again averaged comparatively with that of the catchment areas served.



Data compiled from census.gov July 2022 data.

Autism continued to be the most prevalent diagnosis among individuals served by TRE’s FSSP in FY23 with over 50% of individuals having that diagnosis. Down Syndrome, Cerebral Palsy and Developmental Disability were the next most prevalent diagnoses along with Seizure Disorders and Fetal Alcohol Syndrome among FSSP participants.



TRE FSSP continues to invest 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) 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 from other TRE departments.

1. The Resource Navigation Position was continued throughout FY23 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 was maintained and accessible on the TRE website and updated regularly. The Resource Navigator was also available to families to answer any questions regarding resources and assist families in locating resources for more specific needs. In FY23 this position also created a seasonal newsletter of local events, activities, and resources for FSSP families.
2. In FY 23 TRE expanded its respite programming to include a new respite program for preteen and teen siblings, Our Time, as well as increasing events for all other respite programs. Since TRE receives no mill levy funding this was made possible with the support of grants from HCPF and Disabling Barriers. The respite programs are staffed by a Respite Specialist, 2 Respite Assistants, 3 Behavior Specialists, a medical professional, and community volunteers for each program. The Respite Specialist has engaged many community partners such as The United States Air Force Academy; University of Colorado, Colorado Springs; Co, Colorado College, and the El Paso County Sherriff's in volunteering for these programs. In FY23 the respite programs utilized 301 community volunteers who generously gave 1542 hours of their time. TRE's respite programs include:
 - **Break Time** provided respite opportunities to families of children 3 months to 21 years of age with special needs/developmental disabilities and their siblings. Break Time held 17 events during FY23 and had 173 children and siblings utilize the program. Events were held on Friday nights and Saturday afternoons at various locations in the community. Volunteers were matched one-on-one with children attending to ensure a fun and safe experience for all.
 - **Cooking Time** increased to monthly events in January of 2023 with the help of grant funding. Cooking Time 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 items including breakfast burritos, holiday cookies and tacos this year. Cooking Time held 8 events during FY 23 and served 25 individuals.
 - **Gathering Time** offers respite to young adults ages 18-35 years old with IDD diagnosis living in their family home. Gathering Time was created and began in January 2022 in response to the requested need for more respite options for adults. Gathering Time increased events to 2 Friday nights a month at the ARC Pikes Peak Region with the help of grant funding in January 2023, with 18 events held and 26 individuals served during FY23. Each event has a theme with activities and dinner encompassing those themes. Themes this year have included tailgating, Cinco De Mayo and a glow dance.
 - **Our Time:** is TRE's newest respite program that is for teen and preteen siblings of individuals with IDD and began in March 2023 with grant funding and served 29 individuals in FY23. Our time is held monthly in a community location and is designed to provide peer support to the siblings who attend and respite for them. Our Time utilizes volunteers who are also siblings of individuals with IDD. To date events have been held at a local arcade and The Colorado Vibes baseball game.

In June 2023, the 3rd Annual Family Fun event was held at a local park with 95 individuals in attendance from all the respite programs. This event included family activities, lunch, volunteers to help facilitate the event, and medical and behavioral staff in attendance.

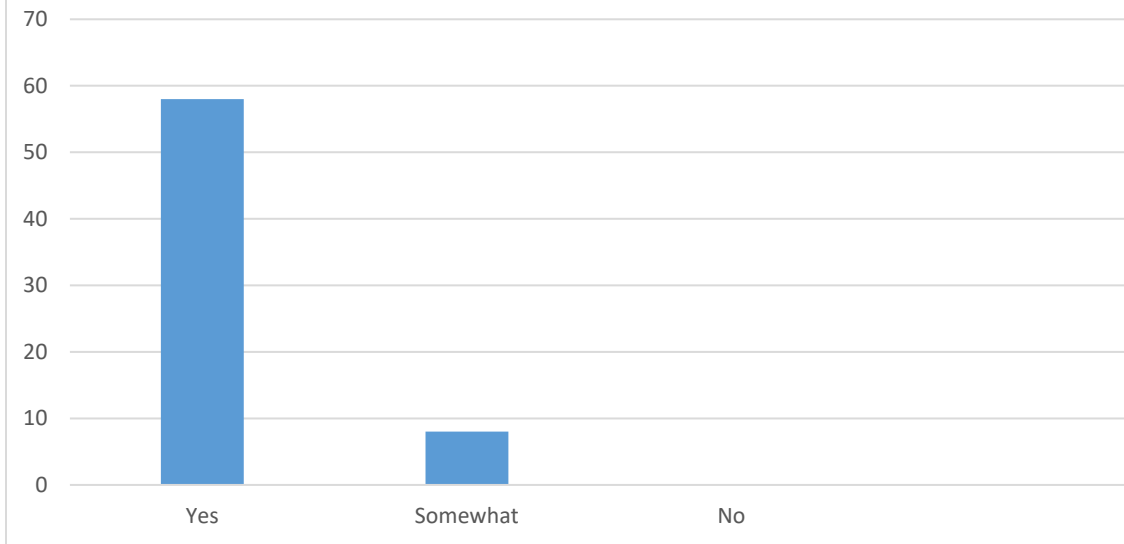
In the spring of 2023 TRE conducted Customer Satisfaction Surveys with all families who were enrolled in the program at that time. 67 families responded to the survey. The results provided below indicate a continued overwhelming satisfaction of families with the services they received through FSSP while also indicating a clear area for improvement with the information we provide about FSSP funding. Results this year reflect the changes that have been required that we make to supporting documentation and the services and activities we can fund by HCPF requirements. Families have been left very frustrated by all the “hoops” they are made to jump through to access funding for what is now a more limited array of services and support. Many have reported it is not worth the effort with 6 families choosing not to continue with FSSP due to the difficulty in accessing funds.



Some of the comments received regarding this question included:

- Our FSC has helped our family tremendously with connection us with resources and supports.
 - She goes above and beyond explaining what services are available for our daughter.
- I am so thankful for my daughters coordinator! I absolutely trust that I can reach out to her with any questions and she will help me. I seriously think we have the best person in the business behind us.
- She is absolutely spectacular. She gets back to me very quick. She has answered any and all of my numerous questions.

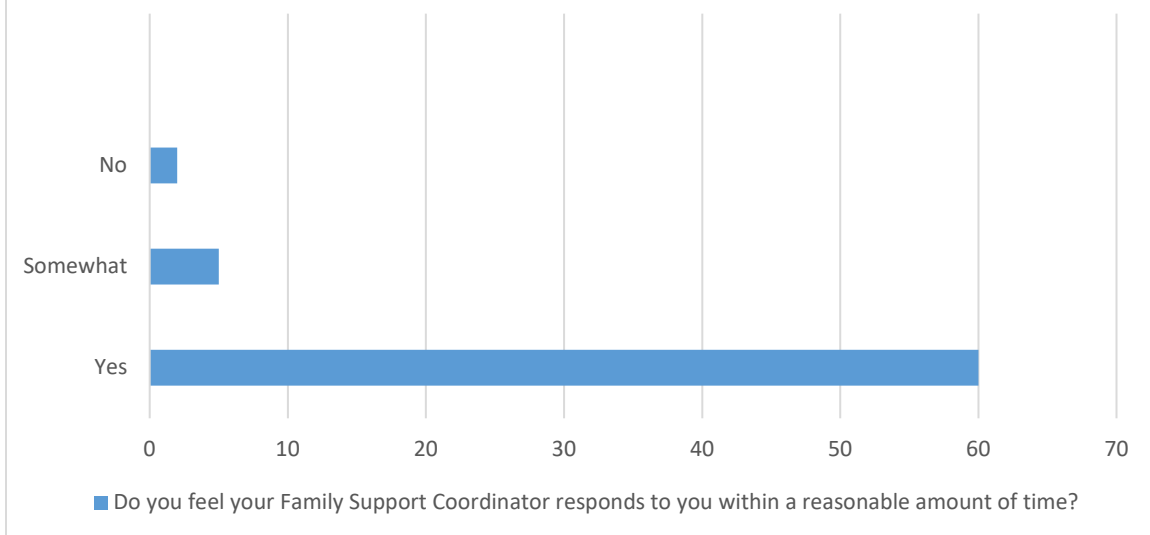
Has your Family Support Coordinator helped you in accessing the resources you need when you need them?



Some of the comments received regarding this question included:

- She has helped me find additional resources.
 - Above and beyond
 - It's not easy.

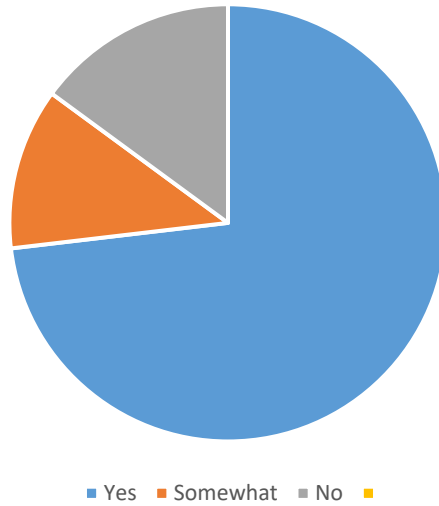
Do you feel your Family Support Coordinator responds to you within a reasonable amount of time?



Some of the comments received regarding this question included:

- Our FSC always responds in a timely manner and provides us with insight as to how to proceed in various situations.
- She has been wonderful and responds to both my emails and phone calls with urgency. She is much appropriate by our family.
 - I never wait longer than 25 hours.

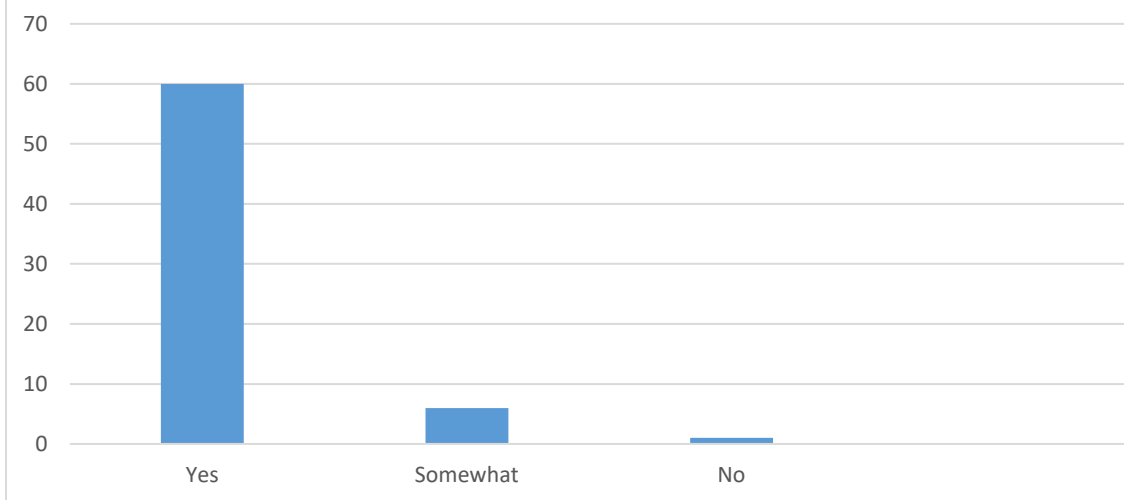
Have you been able to access the Family Support funding for what you needed for the person you care for?



Some of the comments received regarding this question included:

- What we are allowed to use the funds for are too restrictive.
- Because I always have to prove I need something for him through a doctor or therapist
- Nothing is approved for our son except respite, despite letters, communication between our case worker, and proof of need. Getting reimbursed for respite has been very difficult every time we use it. We went thru alot to Qualify and to stay Qualified, Yet they do not make it easy to use our funding. We get a lot of that they no longer fund this and that or we need Dr. Letter for Everything. Then More paperwork. I Understand some of it and why but it's a lot sometimes.
- We have had some requests that I didn't think would fit in to any category and she researched to see what she could do.

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:

- Again, I couldn't have asked for a better person to help us with this. She is fantastic!
 - Unfortunately, many items that were helpful to us are no longer offered.
 - Yes. She has helped whenever I have asked for anything Confusing!

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

- Make more things available to be covered, expand the items covered again.
- Make programs more easily accessible, and easier to know what is available.
- Please go back to covering more stuff! If a therapist writes as LOMN, it shouldn't be questioned!
- Make programs more easily accessible, and easier to know what is available.
- Open up the program back to what it was like when we could use the funds to help your kiddos.

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 and is often tweaked to assist families in better understanding how FSSP funding can be used. This document provides an overview of how FSSP funding works, details of each funding category, a list of things FSSP cannot fund and TRE's FSSP Emergency Funding Criteria. This document is given every July with each family's allocation letter as well as during each annual Family Support Plan meeting. Family Support Coordinators are also inviting families to attend and join the Family Support Council, so they have a better voice to address these concerns.

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. TRE FSSP is not supported by Mill Levy funding and has looked to grants and other funding sources to be able to meet the needs of our families and the administrative priorities of the program such as automating processes like expenditure tracking to make operating this program more effective as 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 and CCHA to help coordinate the extensive medical and therapy needs that many of the individuals FSSP serves have.
- **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 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 grants from the Pikes Peak United Way and Diverus Health this year. Those grant funds were designated for FSSP families to receive memberships to community recreation sites such as the Cheyenne Mountain Zoo, Denver Aquarium and the Denver Museum of Nature and Science among others. 123 FSSP families were provided memberships during FY23.

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.

- **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 Sib shops to further support the siblings of the individuals we serve and our newest respite program, Our Time. The Resource library also contains educational books (in both written and audio formats) and videos covering a wide range of topics for families 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 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 Time 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.
- **Transportation-** Families were assisted this year in utilizing Medicaid transportation providers and public transit options when appropriate.

TRE's FSSP was 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 support they need.
- Ensuring families understand FSSP funding and what is needed to access those funds for their family member and making it as easy as possible to understand and access.
- Supporting continued increased access to quality respite care in all areas, which is the most requested service from families.
- 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. In addition, the \$650 cap on the cost of community recreation center memberships is not in line with the actual cost of those memberships (even with a generous discount provided to TRE by The YMCA of the

Pikes Peak Region) and the additional out of pocket expenses prohibit many families from being able to use funding for this need. 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 typical recreation opportunities for individuals served by FSSP. Families have expressed frustration that FSSP funding for recreational activities and lessons must be limited to disability specific activities. They often do not have the financial means to enroll their children in these activities and feel it is very segregating, rather than fostering inclusion in the community with their children's typically developing peers.
- Access to transportation for needs such as getting 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.