



**Safe Families
for Children**

*Surrounding families in crisis with
caring, compassionate community*



How Safe Families for Children Works

A Circle of Support



Family Friend



Family in Crisis



Host Family



Family Coach



Safe Families Church



Resource Friend

Safe Families for Children: History, Impact and Growth

US Impact and Growth

- Founded in Chicago in 2003
- 120 chapters in the US in 40 states
- Facilitated over 50,000 hosting arrangements,
- 50,000 volunteers,
- 2300 churches
- Average stay is 6 weeks with 70% of children ages 5 and below
- 92% of kids return home or to a relative; 3% enter foster care
- 15 Safe Families laws enacted

International Impact and Growth

- United Kingdom – Wales, England, Scotland
 - 40 cities
 - 848 churches
 - 3256 Families supported
 - 7829 children served
 - Piloted the first Public Social Partnerships funding tool, an outcomes-based contract
- Canada
 - 3 locations – Toronto, London, Manitoba
- Hong Kong – Exploring Possible Start-Up

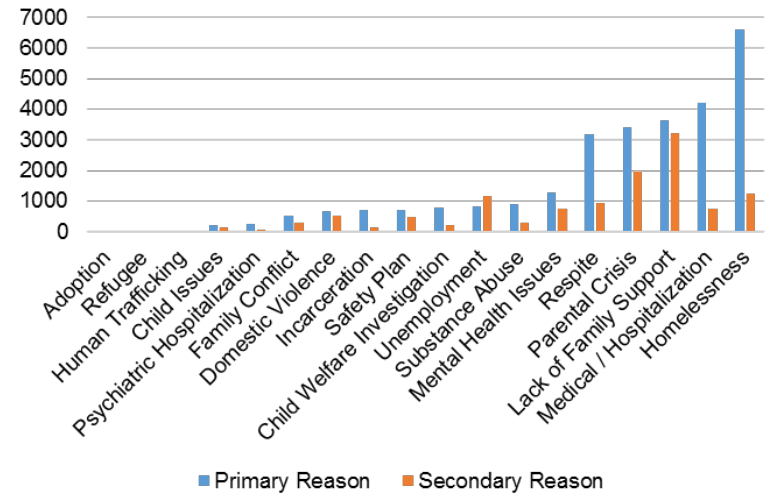


Safe Families by the Numbers (all sites)

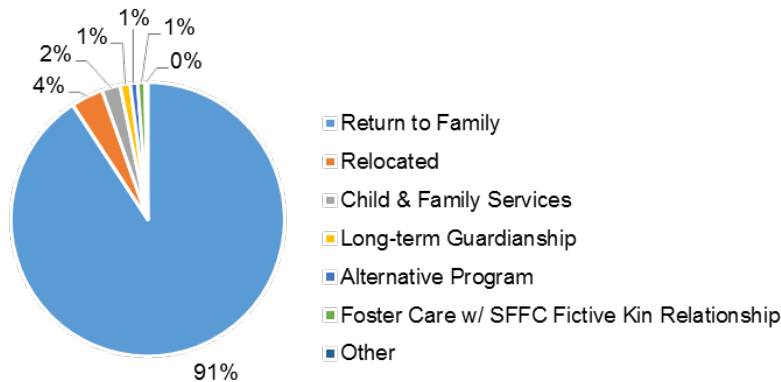
Referral Sources

- Hospitals
- Police Stations
- State workers
- Homeless Centers
- Schools
- Addiction Recovery Programs
- Social Service
- Agencies
- Churches
- Domestic Violence Centers
- Crisis Pregnancy Centers
- Adoption Centers
- Day Care Centers

Referral Reasons (#)



Hosting Outcomes (%)





SFFC RCT

The **Develop & Test evaluation** tracked CPS administrative data on a total of **276 families and their 597 children** enrolled in the study prior to January 1, 2017.

The **Compare & Learn evaluation** included **99 families and their 216 children** enrolled in the study for the two years ending December 31, 2018. The study tracked primary and secondary child welfare outcomes using CPS administrative data available through June 30, 2020.

SFFC is a safe and effective intervention for deflecting families from foster care.



Question #1

Would children involved in an investigation for maltreatment and deemed appropriate for SFFC hosting be less likely to be taken into protective custody or later moved into foster care if involved in the SFFC intervention groups compared to families who received child protective services as usual (SAU)?

Findings

79% of families that were offered SFFC hosting services were **deflected from foster care**, compared to 63% of families receiving services as usual.

SFFC is as safe as services as usual when a child remains in their parent's legal custody after the CPS agency initiates a maltreatment investigation.



Research Question #2

Are children referred to SFFC more likely to experience a recurrence of mistreatment than children receiving child protective services as usual?

Finding

Children referred to services provided by SFFC were at **no greater risk of reoccurring maltreatment than children receiving SAU**. These results mitigate the concern that leaving the children in their parents' legal custody or reunifying them too quickly exposes the child to a higher risk of repeat maltreatment.

SFFC is an effective safe intervention for reunifying children with their parents.



Research Question #3

Will children involved in a child maltreatment investigation be more likely to stay in the custody of their parents or return to their custody within one year if allocated to the SFFC intervention group rather than the child protective services as usual comparison group?

Findings

81% of families that were offered SCCF hosting services had their children **in their home one year after the hosting service** ended, as compared to 66% of families receiving SAU.

Replication Challenges



- Paid **staff lead** v. **volunteer lead** at start-up
 - If **staff lead funding** is first-priority, If **volunteer lead partnership** first-priority
- Right start-up **catalyst**, if **too tied to social services** slower development of innovation and community referral sources.
- Clear picture of community need to **project realistic targets** for volunteers, staff, and number of families served.
- Community/Public Systems **re-education** from foster care and adoption **child focused/parent deficits** to **parent strengthening through relationships**



Fidelity Measurement

Core activities produce desired outcomes/Allows innovation

- Church based radical **hospitality**
- **Family strengthen** focused
- **Relationships/shared life** between SFFC volunteer and family
- **Community support** network **built and accessed** by family
- **Easy and quick** availability
- Creation of **trusting long-term** relationship

Not Fidelity: Organizational policies and procedures




Questions?

Follow-up Contact Information

Abel C. Ortiz, Director of Program Development and
Evaluation, Safe Families for Children

aortiz@safefamilies.net

A high-angle, circular photograph of a diverse group of people, including children and adults of various ethnicities, looking upwards towards the camera. The people are arranged in a tight circle, creating a sense of unity and community. The lighting is bright, suggesting an outdoor setting. The quote is centered over the image.

**“The problem with
our world is that
we draw the circle
of family too
small” -
*Mother Teresa***