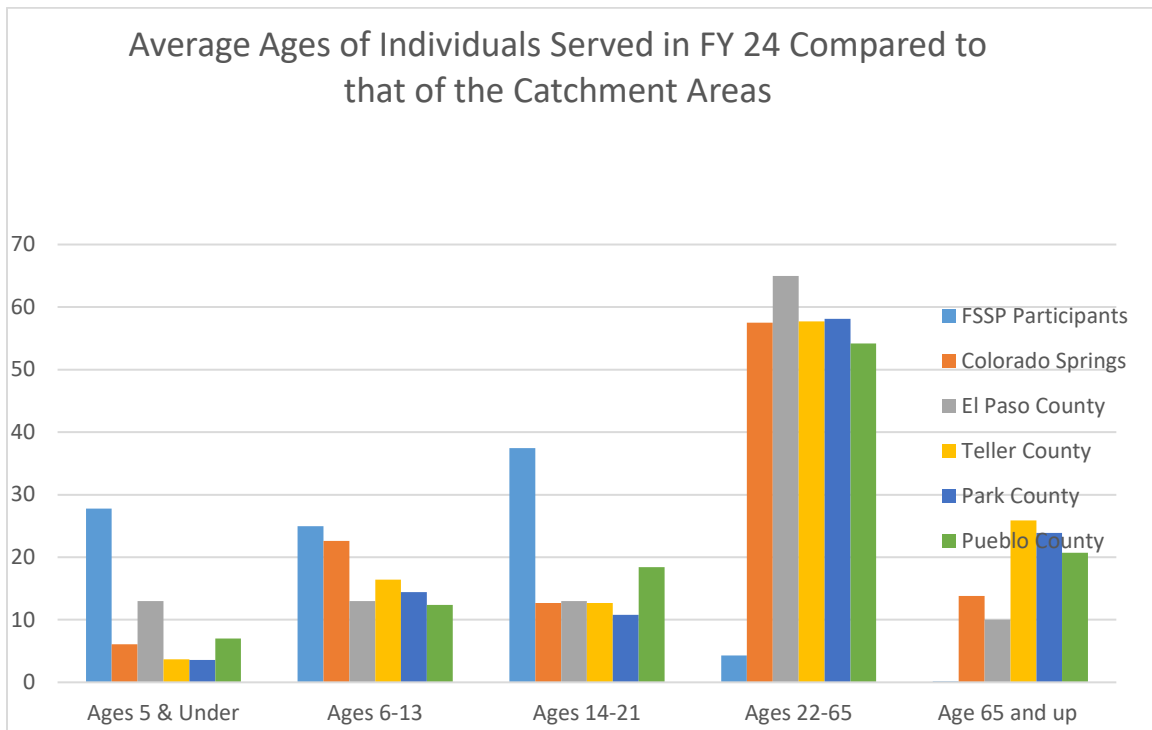




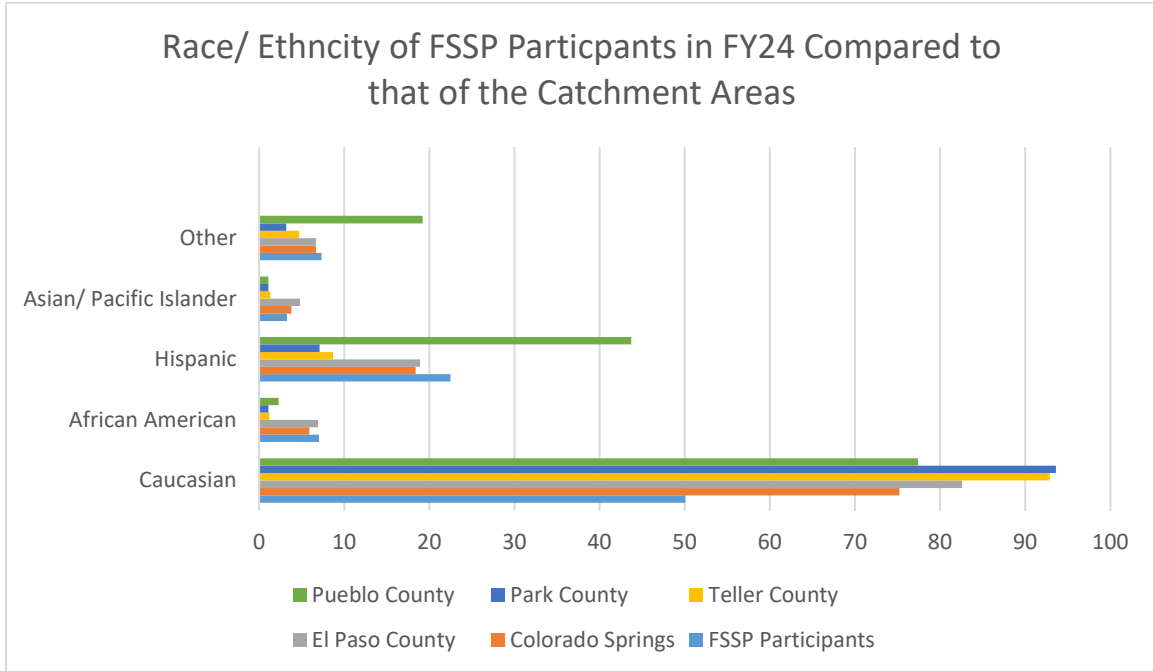
# The Resource Exchange Evaluation of the Effectiveness of the Family Supports and Services Program for FY 2023-2024

The Resource Exchange’s FSSP Program served 641 individuals from under the age of one through age 70 during this fiscal year.

The chart below compares the age of members 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. The program has seen a significant increase in referrals for children under the age of 5 over the course of this year. It is unknown what is driving that increase as there has not been a significant increase in the general population for this age group.

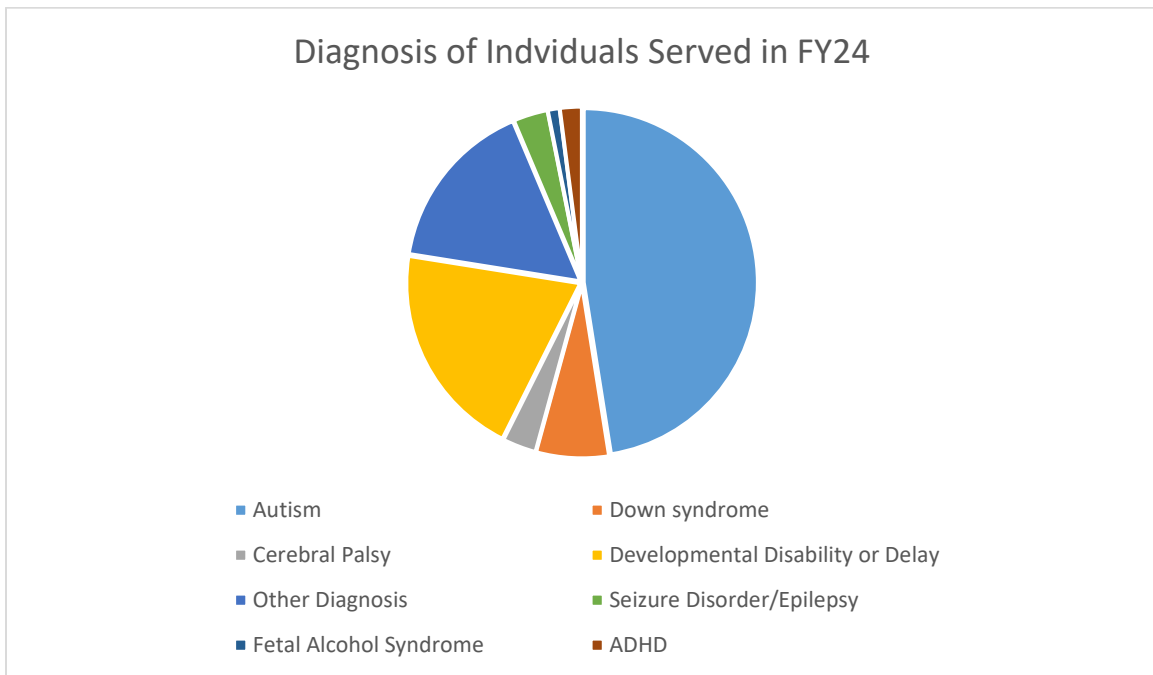


As shown in the next chart, the distribution of race and ethnicity of FSSP members during Fiscal Year 24 compared to that of each of TRE’s catchment areas.



Data compiled from census.gov July 2022 data and pueblo.county.org

Autism continued to be the most prevalent diagnosis among members served by TRE’s FSSP in FY24 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, Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, ADD and ADHD among FSSP members.



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 and the Arc of Pueblo.
- 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)
- 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, YMCA of Pueblo, City of Colorado Springs Therapeutic Recreation Program, Special Olympics, and Tae Kwon Do.
- Colorado Bluesky Enterprises Early Intervention Program.

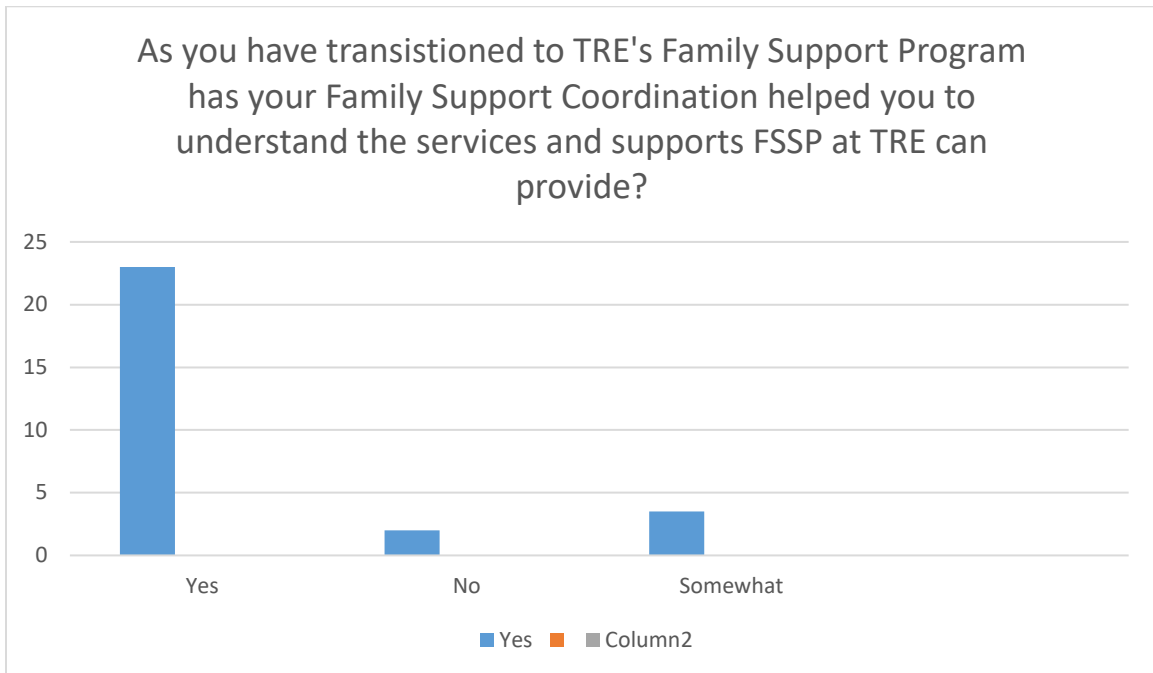
TRE FSSP has continued to use the funding allowed for multiple families to implement respite programs for the community. In FY 24 TRE hosted 63 respite events across our 4 respite programs. The respite programs are staffed by a Respite Programs and Volunteer Manager, 3 part time Respite Assistants, 3 Behavior Specialists, a medical professional, and community volunteers for each program. The Respite and Volunteer Manager has engaged many community partners such as The United States Air Force Academy, University of Colorado, Colorado Springs, Colorado College, and various private companies and agencies throughout the community in volunteering for these programs. In FY24 the respite programs utilized 960 community volunteers who generously gave 1800 hours of their time. TRE's respite programs were also supported by the generosity of the community and received \$45,000 in grant funding and donations from organizations such as Disabling Barriers, Nutrition Camp School Foundation and PASCO. 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 24 events during FY24 and had 199 children and siblings utilize the program. Events were held on Friday nights and Saturday afternoons at ABA agencies that TRE has partnered with in the community. Volunteers were matched one-on-one with children attending to ensure a fun and safe experience for all with a behavior specialist and a medical professional at each event.
- **Cooking Time:** held 10 events and served 31 teens and preteens during FY24. Cooking Time utilizes the adaptive kitchen at the ARC to teach cooking skills to preteens and teens while offering respite to their families. Volunteers were utilized to assist participants in their cooking projects. Participants have learned to cook items including casseroles, soups and breakfast.
- **Gathering Time:** offers respite to young adults ages 18-35 years old with IDD diagnosis living in their family home. Gathering Time held 21 events and served 34 individuals during FY24. Volunteers assisted participants in participating in activities at events. Events also had an onsite behavior specialist and medical professional. Each event has a theme with activities and dinner encompassing those themes. Themes this year have included superheroes, tea party, and many holiday themes.
- **Our Time:** is TRE's respite program that is for teen and preteen siblings of individuals with IDD. In FY 24 Our Times served 29 siblings and held 7 events. Our Time is held 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 Top Golf, Brush Crazy and a Ramen and board game night at the ARC Pikes Peak Region.

In June 2024 the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Family Fun event was held at a local park with 71 individuals in attendance from all the respite programs and 37 staff and volunteers. This event included family activities, lunch, volunteers to help facilitate the event, and medical and behavioral staff in attendance.

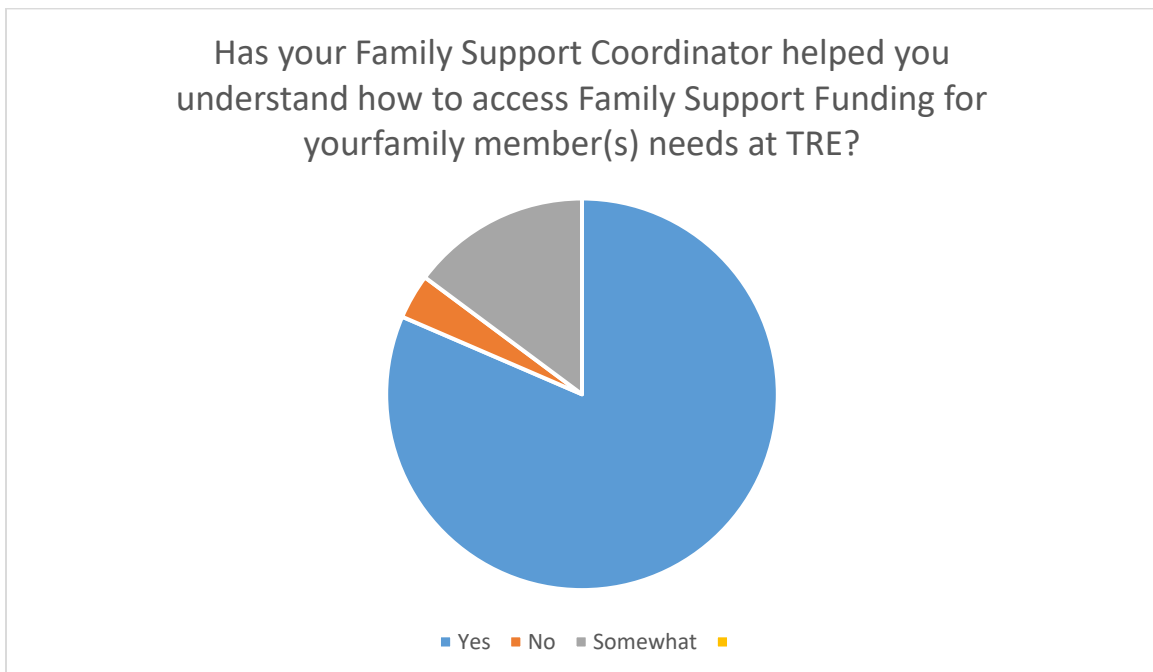
In the spring of 2024 TRE conducted 2 Customer Satisfaction Surveys with all families who were enrolled in FSSP. Surveys were sent to each family enrolled who had recently transitioned from Colorado Bluesky Enterprises to TRE with 27 respondents. Surveys were also sent to all families enrolled throughout the year with TRE's FSSP program. 76 families responded to that survey.

**Pueblo Family Survey Results:**



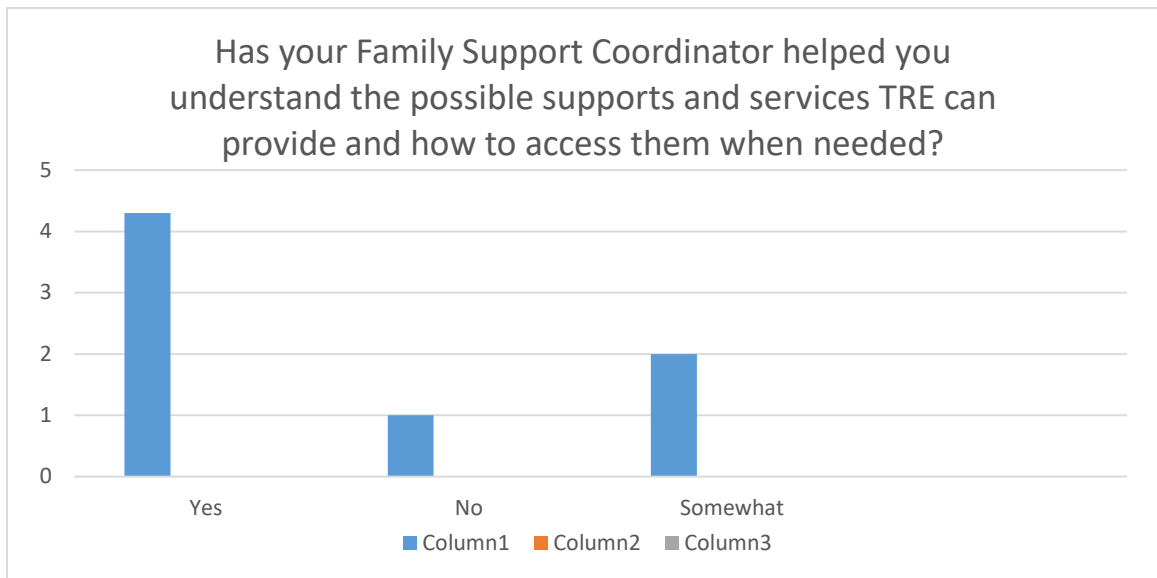
Some of the comments received regarding this question included:

- *Kerri has gone above and beyond helping us.*
- *Kelly Murphy has been very helpful; she has taken the time to make sure we are properly informed and taken care of.*



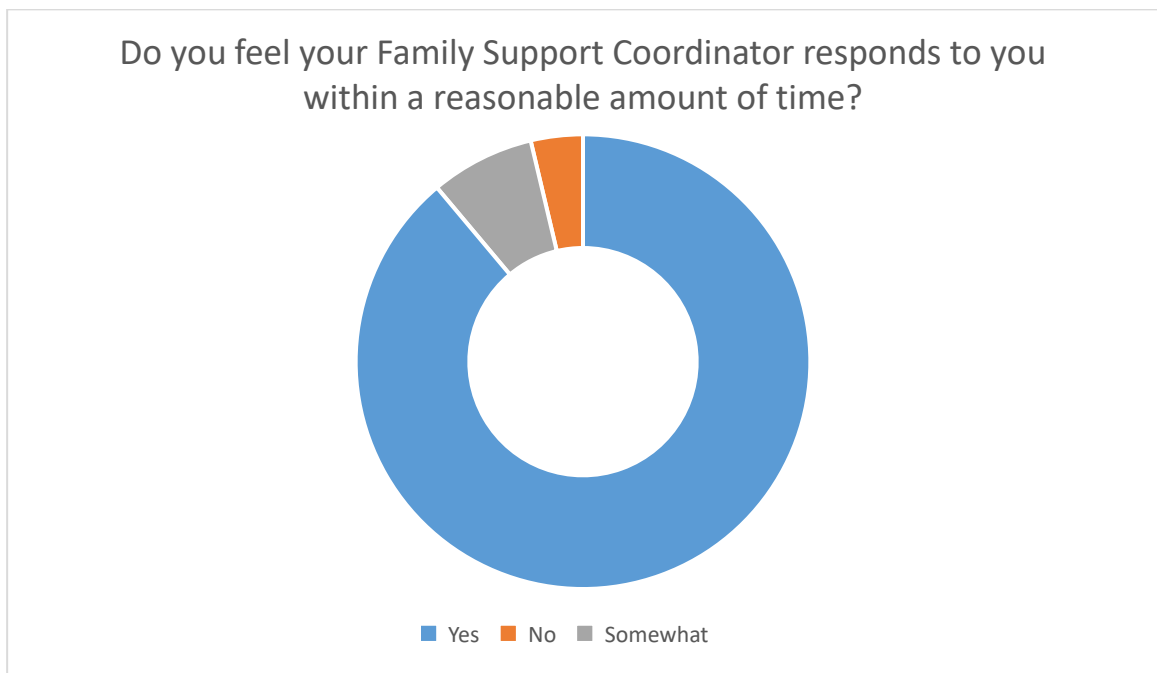
What barriers if any have you experienced in accessing Family Support funding and services when needed since transitioning to TRE?

- *Respite checks take forever to get*
  - *Delays in reimbursement*
    - *No problems*
- *Biggest barrier is they don't allow dual enrollment with Colorado Blue Sky*



Some of the comments received regarding this question included:

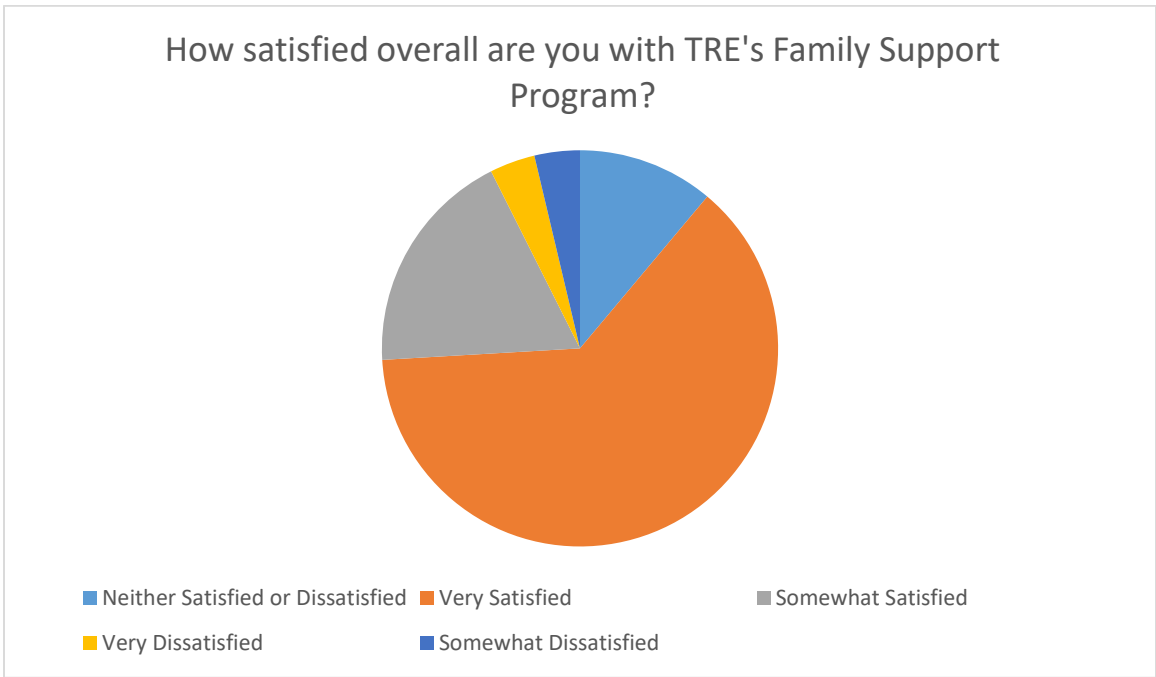
- *Kerri sends whatever is needed*
  - *Kerri is amazing*



Some of the comments received regarding this question included:

- *always answers all questions and concerns and a timely manner*
- *First time after switch had communication, last few weeks not be able to any response via phone or email*
  - *Always makes time to answer my phone calls*

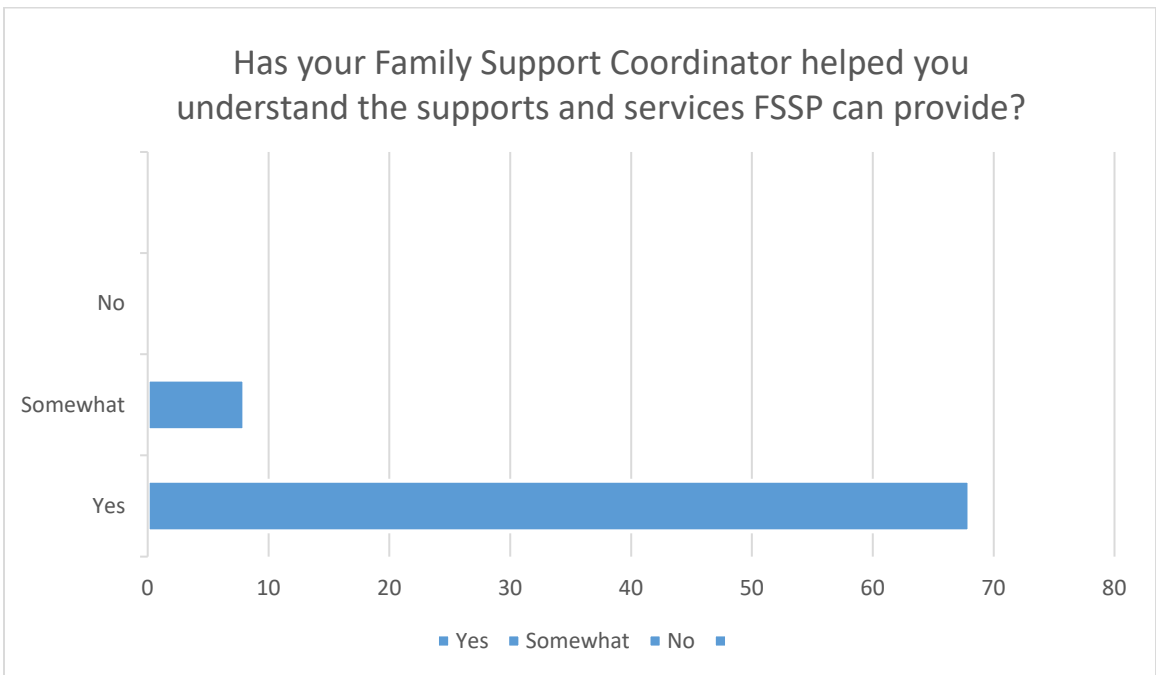
### How satisfied overall are you with TRE's Family Support Program?



Some of the comments received regarding this question included:

- *I always get a fast email response back when I email the lady, I talk to is always helpful she answers my questions to the best of her ability and she's very nice*
  - *Respite checks should come sooner*
- *Thought what we needed was being done, however still waiting on things*
  - *Questions are answered in a clear and descriptive manner*
- *I just wish more was covered by the program but otherwise it's great! It's been very helpful for us! Very grateful to have it*

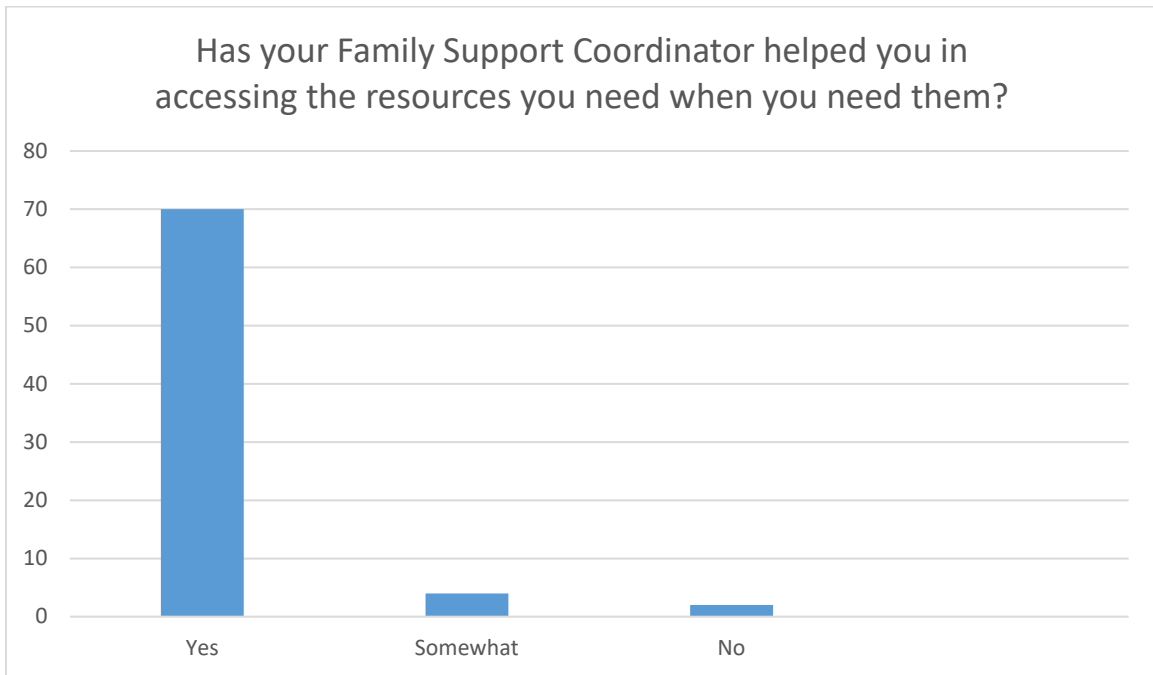
### Survey 2 for all other enrolled families:



Some of the comments received regarding this question included:

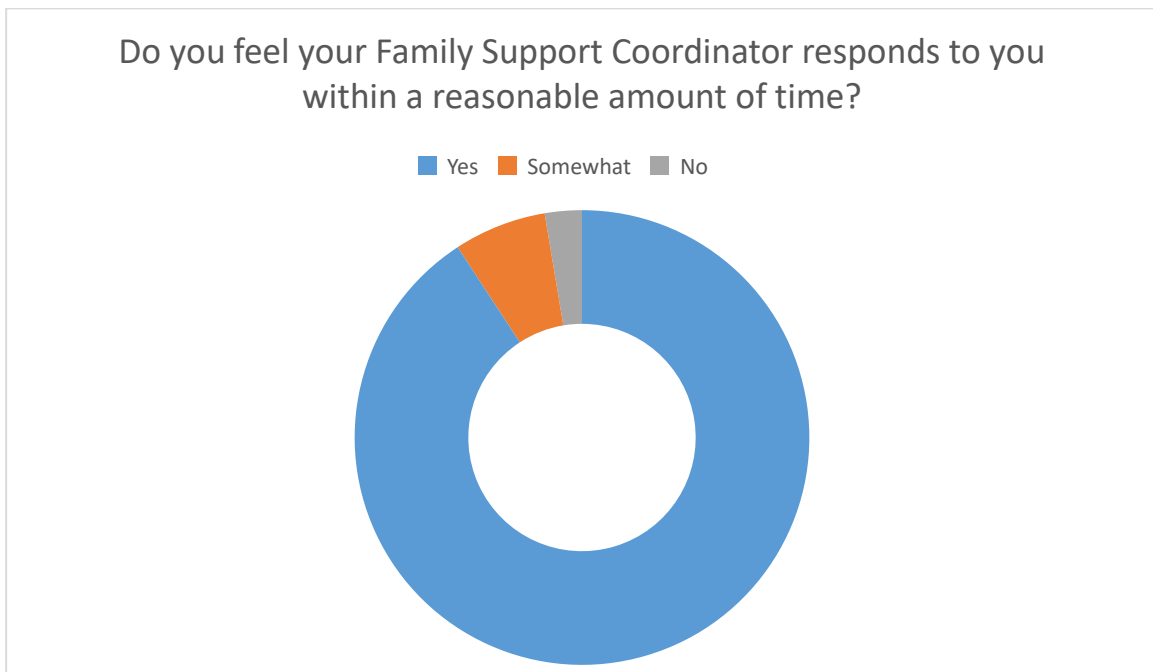
- *Penny Pasqua has always responded quickly to and answered any questions I have had. She is so supportive of our daughter's needs and our whole family.*

- *I trust that if I ever need more information I can reach out and get an answer*
- *Still awaiting further clarification and details of what my Grandson qualifies for.*
- *Kelly has been super helpful! The programs can get confusing in general, but she has always been really helpful and responsive trying to explain them.*
- *What is age appropriate seems to not be clearly defined and using that terminology has helped deny almost every request we've asked for.*



Some of the comments received regarding this question included:

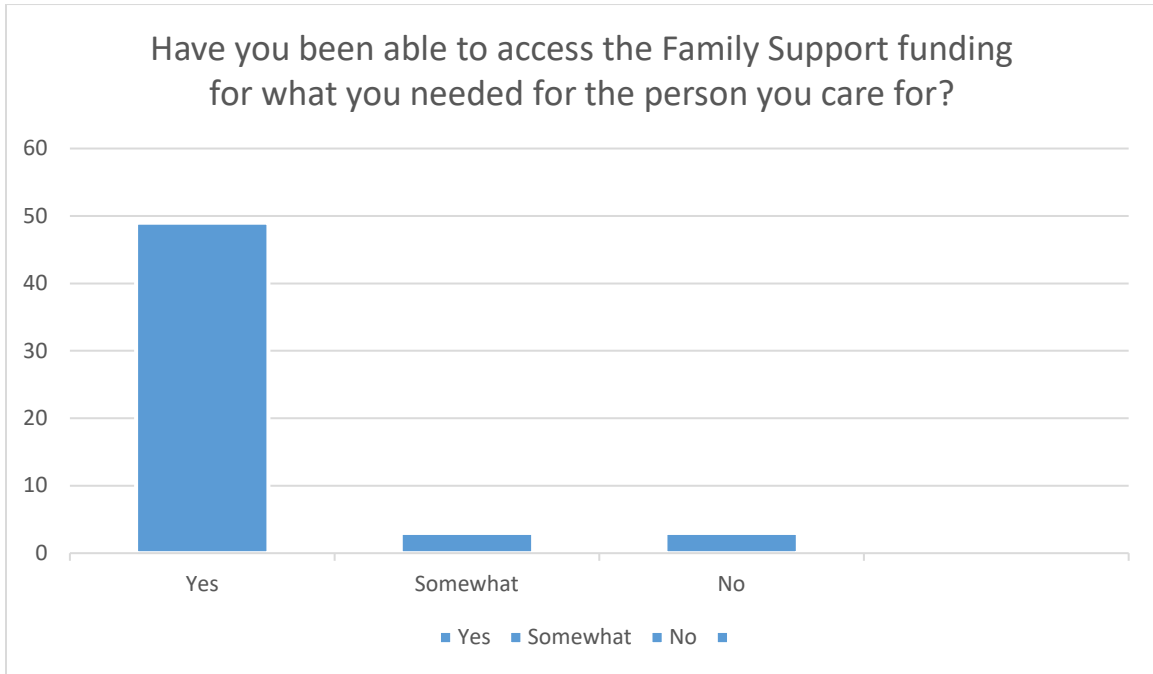
- *Don't get the help I need*
- *They have helped us, however this program has BARELY covered anything we have requested.*
  - *If they don't know, she always finds out for me.*
  - *No complaints here*



Some of the comments received regarding this question included:

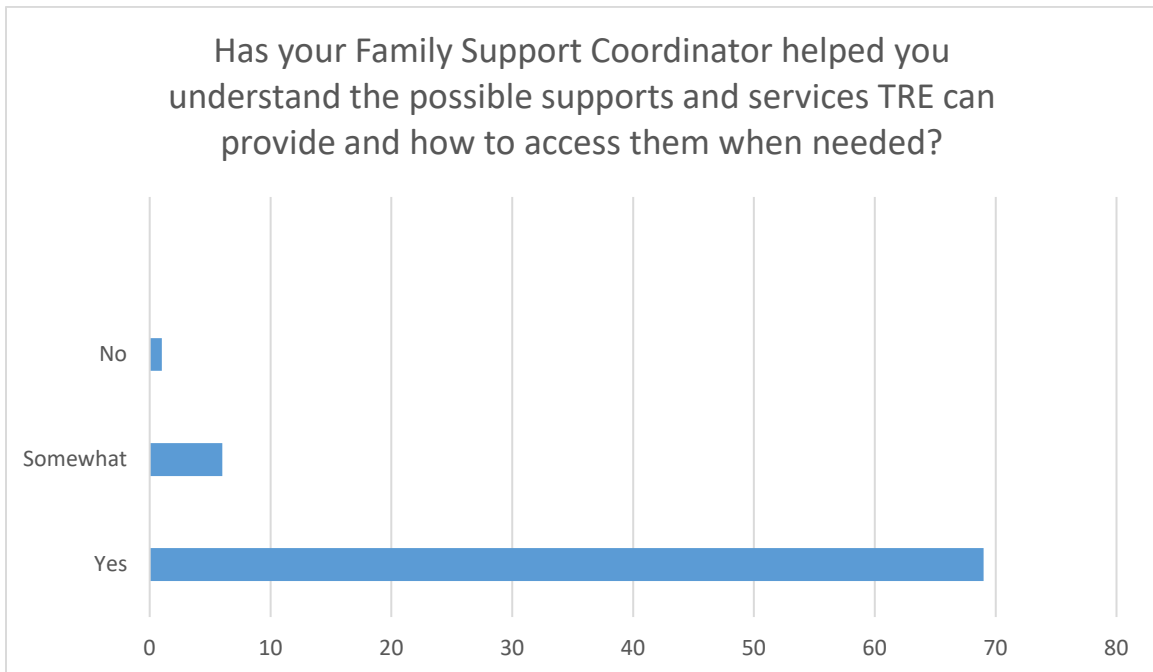
- *. Penny always gets back with me very quickly*

- Always responds very quickly
- Kelly answers almost immediately.
- She is very punctual and considerate!



Some of the comments received regarding this question included:

- Family Support Funding does not always cover what I hope it will but we appreciate the help we've received for what has been covered.
- Because of the strict deadline of October 31st for submissions last year, we were not able to request funding for a very large medical bill (\$2000.00) because the bill came in in November, past the deadline.
  - Too much paperwork and red tape to go through now for typical support needs
- I can text, email or call and if I have a question on what is covered and I can't find it I reach out and get a response within a day

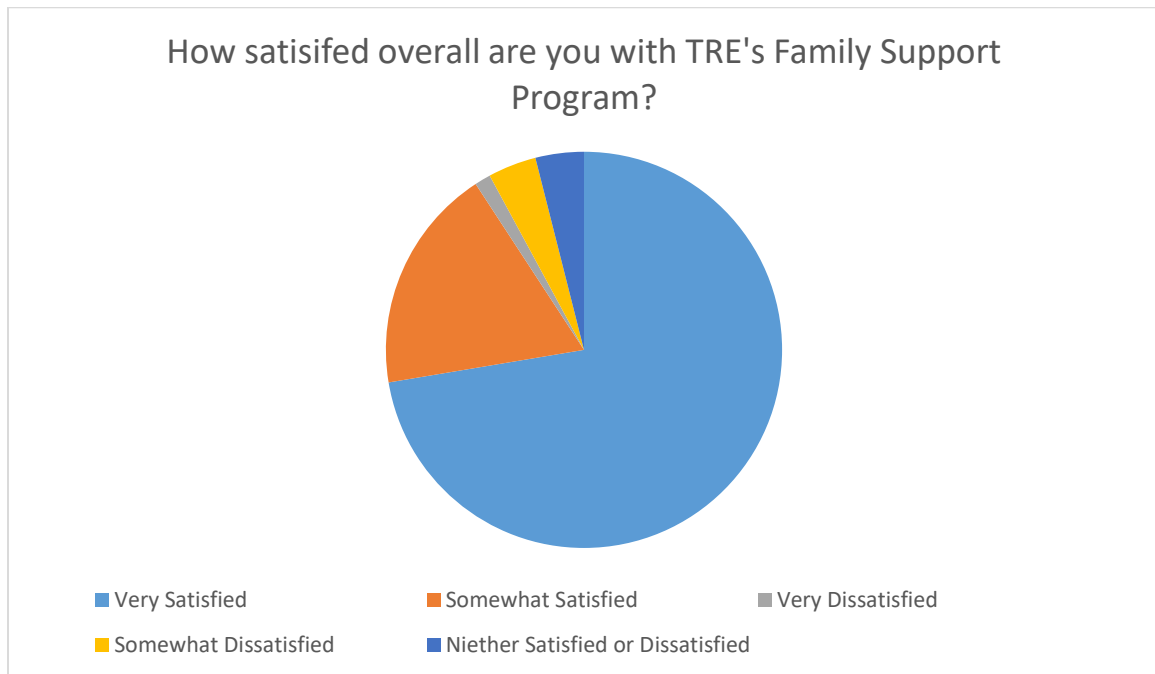


Some of the comments received regarding this question included:

- She often doesn't know the answers to my questions.



- *Anytime we have a question she has responded and explained. Fssp with TRE covers less than fssp with other providers and that is the confusing part.*



Some of the comments received regarding this question included:

- *Too many restrictions on what can /cannot be reimbursed. The issue with not being able to request reimbursement for a bill that was given to us late by the hospital seems unfair.*
- *lots of extra paperwork needed for supports too many hoops to jump through for approvals*
- *Veronica is always willing to help and get us connected to resources. She is very resourceful and knowledgeable about community supports and resources.*
- *So many restrictions and conditions to get resources! Always looking for the cheapest option and not for the best*
- *Kelly and ALL THE STAFF @ TRE are really wonderful and helpful and caring. I am Blessed that you have stepped in to help and continue to do your BEST for my family and me, thank you so much and God bless you ALL.*

The last question of both the customer satisfaction surveys 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:

- Maybe do a quarterly family get together. Something simple like a park day
- Is there a way to connect parents for either a support group or fostering friendships among our special kiddos? More zoo passes or other community events!
- If you only give respite care or diapers for 16-year Olds state that. Don't tell families coming in if you need sensory items, we can reimburse them because TRE doesn't do that. Everything is declined saying age appropriate. It's frustrating. It feels like the only thing we benefit from is respite care. There needs to be a clear definition of age appropriate. Make a t chart or something that shows for each age group what you will and will not cover. Very infuriating being constantly declined.
- Itemized checks that show what TRE reimbursed

Survey responses continued to be overall positive and indicate that most families are satisfied with the program while offering us valuable feedback for areas of improvement, including better communication of what can and cannot be funded and requirements around cost effectiveness and what constitutes age typicalness. FSSP staff will work on creating more constant documentation of these areas and develop better documentation and feedback to provide families. Coordinators are also inviting families to attend and join the Family Support Council, so they have an opportunity to address these concerns.

TRE's Family Support Council has long 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 as even billing for all enrolled members each month does not generate enough revenue to cover all the current staffing and administrative cost. The current funding for Service Coordination has led to the need for very high caseloads to maximize revenue which does not allow enough time to adequately provide the level of service that has been the standard for TRE's FSSP and that the families served have come to expect. The addition of Pueblo County to our catchment area this year also meant a further increase in the size of caseloads since the program is not funded well enough to staff it in a way that allows for the level of needed service coordination our families need and deserve. 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. The inadequate funding of this program and the administrative burden of administering it severely impedes its effectiveness.

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.
- **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. TRE FSSP partnered with The Pueblo YMCA this year to assist families in Pueblo accessing memberships through their organization. FSSP Families were also connected to community recreation centers in their neighborhoods. 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 respite program, Our Time, to support the siblings of individuals in the program.
- **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.
- **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:

- Building more participation in The Family Support Council with representation from Park, Teller and Pueblo Counties.
- The addition of Pueblo County to our catchment area has proven challenging to locate the needed services those families need. Staff will work to develop, learn and understand the few community resources available there.
- 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, especially Pueblo County where there are few respite options. TRE's FSSP program is planning and prioritizing finding funding to expand our Break Time Program to Pueblo County and eventually all our respite programs.
- Access to recreational opportunities for the entire family. 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 continue to express 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.