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### **New Tool Lays Groundwork for Measuring Work in Family Support**

*Study shows Colorado Family Support Assessment 2.0 is step in the right direction for measuring family progress*

Denver – A tool developed in Colorado is laying the groundwork for how progress is measured in the field of family support. In collaboration, the Family Resource Center Association, OMNI Institute and the University of Colorado, Boulder, recently had a study published that validates the reliability of the Colorado Family Support Assessment 2.0 (CFSA 2.0), a tool that can be used by family support professionals for managing cases and measuring progress.

With service organizations being held more accountable for the work they are doing, it is vital for these organizations to be able to prove their methods work. This can be a challenge in the field of family support, where measurement tools need to align with a program's underlying philosophy, effectively integrate into the delivery of the program and not create unnecessary work for an organization's staff or the families they serve.

Family Resource Center Association worked with their network of member Family Resource Centers and OMNI Institute to refine and test a family support measurement tool. Family Resource Centers use a philosophy of strengths-based family development, in which a Family Advocate acts as a coach and systems navigator to support the family as they set and meet their own goals. With this in mind, the Colorado Family Support Assessment was revised to the CFSA 2.0.

"This tool should do an excellent job of helping families figure out where they are, and more importantly, where they want to go," says Melissa Richmond, one of the study's authors. "It is comprehensive, and structured to obtain reliable and accurate data."

The tool underwent rigorous testing to determine its accuracy. The results of the study indicate that with training, staff members are able to use the CFSA 2.0 in a reliable way to measure family progress.

“It’s the concept that you can’t get good data coming out, if you don’t have good data going in,” explains Mark Kling, FRCA executive director. “In order for us to really know what is working to help families, we need an assessment tool that asks the right questions, solicits accurate responses and will generate similar scores, regardless of which family support professional is doing the assessment. Now we know we have the tool that will give us accurate information.”

The article was authored by Melissa K. Richmond (OMNI Institute), Fred C. Pampel (University of Colorado, Boulder), Flavia Zarcu (OMNI Institute), Virginia Howey, and Brenda McChesney (Family Resource Center Association) and published in “Research on Social Work Practice.” Read the abstract:

<http://rsw.sagepub.com/content/early/2015/07/19/1049731515596072.abstract>

The Family Resource Center Association is available to train organizations in the use of the CFSA 2.0. Please contact Director of Health Programs, Rachel Shuck [rshuck@cofamilycenters.org](mailto:rshuck@cofamilycenters.org) for more information about training opportunities for the CFSA 2.0 and the Quality Standards of Family Support and Strengthening.

The Family Resource Center Association (FRCA) connects the network of 24 Colorado Family Resource Centers which annually help over 56,000 families in 44 counties become self-reliant and successful. FRCA exists to connect resources, training, data, advocacy and assistance to advance family support in Colorado. For more information, go to [www.cofamilycenters.org](http://www.cofamilycenters.org).

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