Helping Families 101:

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Family Resource Centers

Governor Jennifer M. Granholm initiated Family Resource Centers with 20 sites in 2003. Family Resource Centers are placed in priority elementary and middle schools to coordinate services according to the goals developed and shared by the family, school, community and other agencies involved. These centers serve as a "one-stop shop" for family services located in or near a neighborhood school.

Today, there are 52 Family Resource Centers operating statewide.

Goals are to:

- Create a user-friendly service model for families using state and local human services.
- Increase efficiency of state and local services by pooling resources.
- Increase academic performance and parental involvement.
- Help schools achieve annual yearly progress standards under the federal No Child Left Behind legislation.

Michigan Department of Human Services staff who work in Family Resource Centers provide families with cash assistance, food, clothing, shelter and prevention services; Medicaid eligibility; emergency assistance for utility shut-off, rental eviction and other housing issues; access to community-based mental health services, therapy and other services in agreement with local partners; and school-based parent-involvement programs.

Evaluations of schools with Family Resource Centers indicate the schools have improved MEAP test scores, reduced absenteeism, and are much more likely than priority schools without Family Resource Centers to meet annual yearly progress standards.

Partner agencies that locate services in Family Resource Centers report significantly improved outcomes for children and families due to the increased accessibility of services. Local evaluations of Family Resource Centers' impact indicate the involvement is positive across a spectrum of school factors including attendance and parental involvement.