Child Support Enforcement • Temporary Assistance for Needy Families • University Partnership Demonstration Project

Partnership to Strengthen Families

TANF Fatherhood Initiative Children's Well-Being (Part 2 of 2)

2011

Prepared by
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Thank you for making investments towards a better Louisiana.

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Executive Summary

This report is the second of two research projects compiled by three partnering Louisiana agencies: Child Support Enforcement (CSE), TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families), and the University of Louisiana at Lafayette Picard Center for Child Development and Lifelong Learning. This research partnership was funded by the federal Administration for Children and Families (ACF) through its Partnership to Strengthen Families Demonstration Project aimed at building the capacity for interagency collaboration to support improving those policies that impact family outcomes.

The first report (See Partnership to Strengthen Families: TANF Fatherhood Initiative Program Assessment Report) was an assessment of the outcomes of eight Fatherhood Initiative Programs (referred to as FI) funded by TANF to offer support services to non-custodial parents–mostly fathers-- who were at risk of losing contact with their children due to a lack of financial, employment, or parenting resources. All of the eight programs were either community based or district attorney offices that had longstanding partnerships with the Child Support Enforcement Section (CSE). This report focuses on the well-being status of 1,358 children whose fathers participated in one of the FI programs and whose data were available across 16 databases from multiple state agencies.

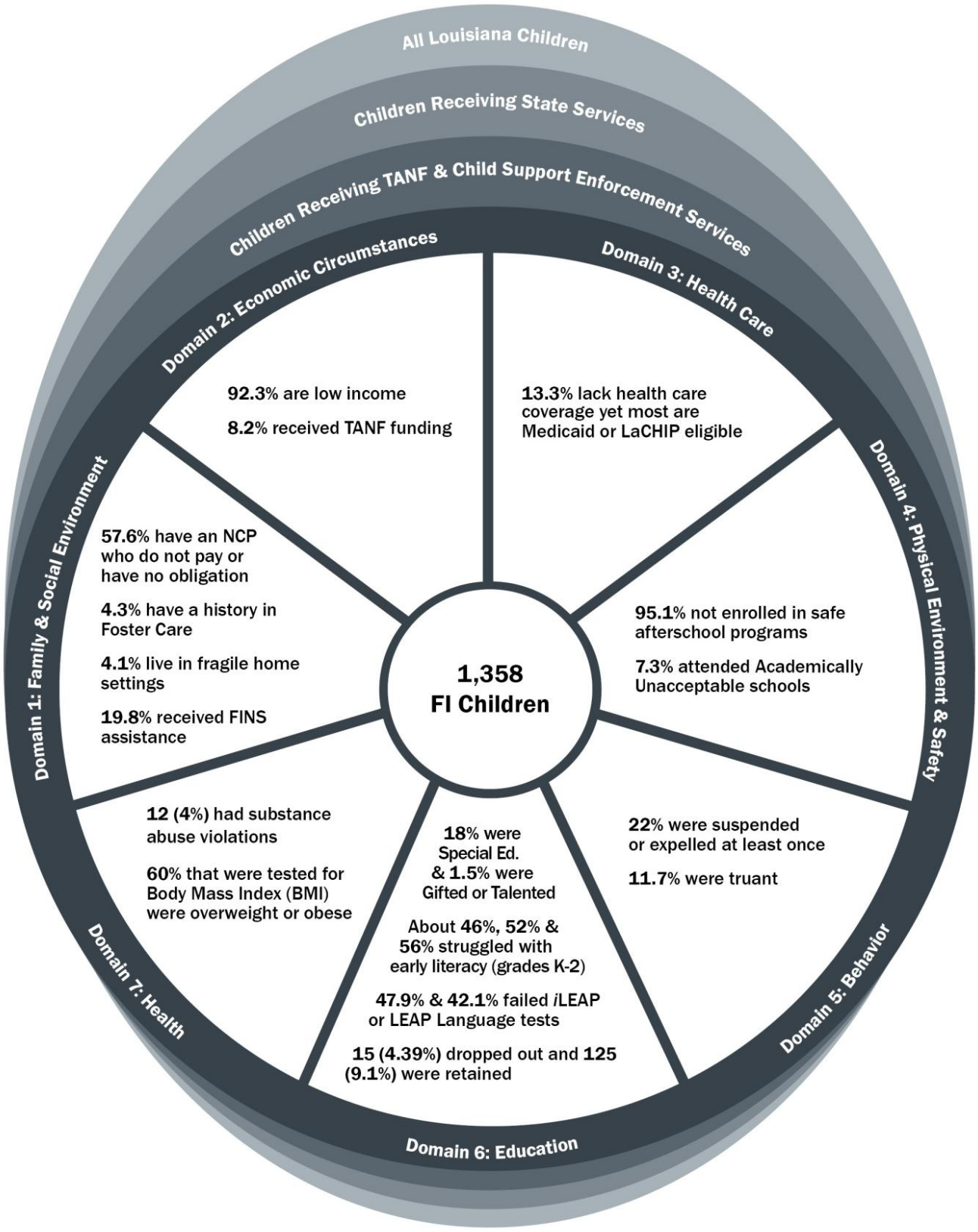
Using a well established federal framework for examining children's well-being, 17 data indicators on these 1,358 FI children were used to define their well-being across seven domains, which ranged from children's family and social environments and education through health. Data summaries on six FI subpopulations were also examined to show the unique differences and needs of specific subgroups of these children. Most of the data came from the fiscal year 2008-09, but two key data sets were examined from later fiscal years for demonstration purposes since it was the only data available for consideration. These data sets, such as obesity status, usually applied to multiple years and accumulate beyond a twelve month period. Figure 1 on the next page represents a summary of the well-being of the 1,358 FI children across all seven domains.

Exploring ways to examine the data on these fatherhood children lead to several other studies. One of these studies showed that the more risks a child faced, the more they were likely to have non-custodial parents who did not pay child support or who had no child support obligation, which children who had fewer risks factors had non-custodial parents who paid something towards their child support (See Figure 43). After adjusting for demographic characteristics, another study that was conducted was a regression analysis which showed that children whose non-custodial parents paid something towards their child support had predictably fewer risks that threatened their well-being (See Figure 44). In the future, similar regression studies could help Louisiana leaders predict the percentage of children who drop out of school based on their non-custodial parents' child support payments in an effort to initiate targeted interventions to improve their wellbeing.

Finally, this report included another set of well-being indicators for several subsets of FI children who faced multiple risks. For example, these sets of data showed how much more vulnerable

specific subpopulations of Fatherhood Initiative children were–especially those who were also truant, were also not enrolled in high quality preschool programs, were also in Foster Care, also received TANF cash assistance, and were also tied to the court system through the Family in Need of Services (FINS) Program. Another sample data set was examined to show Louisiana's capacity to tie state-funded services and interventions benefiting children and families to the outcomes of children when multiple data bases are used to fully assess the status and outcomes of vulnerable children. This small sample of Fatherhood Initiative children showed that when compared to one year before their non-custodial parents participated in the Fatherhood Initiative Program and received needed services, there was a significant decrease in the percentage of them who failed their state language test during and one year after their non-custodial parent participated. These data imply that services to their parents may positively impact their school performance. (See Appendix 9 for details.)

Figure 1. Well-being Summary Profile of Children whose data were found across 16 State Databases



Introduction

Since 1975, federal and state agencies have been authorized to help ensure the financial well-being of children through the collection and enforcement of child support from non-custodial parents. Since that time stakeholders have recognized the importance of non-custodial parents' participation in children's lives as well as their payment toward child support, especially from non-custodial male parents. Countless studies have shown the positive impact child support payments have on children's financial and emotional well-being.

However, less is known about the Impact of child support payments in the context of multiple factors that impact the outcomes of children. Before such studies can be undertaken, significant collaboration and effort must be invested across several public agencies to first compile data that defines the status of children who are growing up in vulnerable home and community environments. This project is an initial attempt to prepare Louisiana for such a study that will begin to define strategies for avoiding fragmented government services and for leveraging limited state resources that yield the highest positive outcomes among children.

A Framework to Define the Well-Being of Children of Non-Custodial, Low-Income Parents

For more than a decade, several agencies within the federal government have collaborated to advance our understanding of the lives of all children across the U.S. and to advance our understanding of what is required to prepare them to be happy and productive adults. Every odd year the Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics (referred to as the Forum) publishes an extensive report on the well-being of our nation's children and every even year an abbreviated report on annual changes in children's well-being status.

The Forum's members compile data on child well-being from their representing government agencies that are examined in seven broad areas:

- *Family and Social Environment,*
- *Economic Circumstances,*
- *Health Care,*
- *Physical Environment and Safety,*
- *Behavior,*
- *Education*, and
- *Health*.

The Forum currently uses 40 indicators across these broad areas to define the status of child well-being in our nation. These indicators have been selected because they are easy to understand by a broad audience, are research based, connect important aspects across children's lives, are measured and updated regularly, and represent large segments of the population rather than one particular group of children (Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics, 2010).

The federal Administration for Children and Families (ACF) serves as a Forum member and has partnered with a Louisiana team to conduct similar analyses by using actual data on a specific subset of children rather than using survey data or estimate projections. The Louisiana Strengthening Families Partnership Demonstration Project team consists of staff from Child Support Enforcement, TANF, and the University of Louisiana's Picard Center. The team created the opportunity to build the state's capacity for similar interagency data collaborations aimed at monitoring the well-being of Louisiana children. Because this is a major exploratory venture for examining children's well-being data in order to facilitate a statewide discussion, the team chose to focus on a specific subgroup of children for demonstration purposes, rather than large populations of children. Seventeen key indicators were used for this inquiry rather than the 40 survey-based indicators used in the Forum's framework.

The Louisiana children studied in this project are primarily those whose fathers are not present in their homes and whose low-income fathers participated in a Louisiana TANF Fatherhood Initiative program to help empower them so that they might provide for their children financially and emotionally. As a result of these children not being raised by both of their biological parents and because they are most likely raised in single parent, low-income households, their well-being is severely threatened without strategic supports or interventions that cut across multiple state agencies. Long term strategies that confront the limits of opportunity, information, and resources that inhibit poverty from passing on from one generation to the next must be sought. Consequently, selecting appropriate supports or interventions and monitoring their impact on children's well-being may require new levels of data collaborations and policy considerations that have not yet been established statewide.

Every state agency plays a role in shaping the lives of low-income children and their families. While various collaborations among these agencies currently exist, they occur in silos, on small scales, and do not include data on individual children across all agencies. Presently, these collaborations are not likely to be coordinated in a manner that allows all Louisiana stakeholders and decision makers to be informed by data that spans across state agencies to prioritize the best interagency interventions that improve children's well-being.

Why should Louisiana expand its data agenda on children's well-being?

The well-being of all citizens is important because it determines our state's current and future social and fiscal viability. According to the national consensus, our adult citizens shape the state's capacity to create a competitive workforce that is often determined by the quality of our educational system. Therefore, prioritizing investments to ensure the well-being of all children through education provides Louisiana its greatest opportunities to compete in a changing global economy and to thrive during lean fiscal periods. Fewer children in poverty will strengthen Louisiana's economy over time; that's a return that more than justifies our investment. However, school readiness research (Dickinson & Tabors, 2001; Rhode Island KIDS COUNT, 2005; Winter &

Kelley, 2008) informs us that in the lives of low-income children, much of their educational quality is limited and/or impacted by the quality of their home environment.

Since these children are at risk simply because they live in low-income families, their poor quality living conditions contribute to a disconnection between their school life and their home life. Living in unstable home and community conditions are further exacerbated for children who attend high poverty, underachieving schools where teachers and staff struggle to understand how to educate low-income children who live stressful lives because they are poor. If home and school cannot function harmoniously, children's well-being continues to be compromised, and when that happens our state's future viability is also compromised. Schools alone are not equipped to address the challenges of educating children living in unstable home environments, yet data collaborations aimed at targeting comprehensive and coordinated interventions across multiple government agencies offer promising results for ensuring better educational and home environment outcomes.

In 2005 the Data Quality Campaign (DQC) organized a national team of founding organizations to facilitate a national collaboration encouraging and supporting state policy makers to improve student achievement based on access to high quality education data. To date, Louisiana's Department of Education is one of only twelve states to implement all 10 Essential Elements of a Longitudinal Data system recommended by the DQC (DQC, 2009). Despite our state's progressive education data collection efforts, our high school graduation rates are not competitive. A recent study found that high school completion is a key predictor of adult poverty, and for Louisiana's children who grow up in a state that persistently faces higher child and overall poverty rates than the rest of the nation this is significant (Blanchard et al, 2010). The findings from this study give us a definitive place to begin interventions.

Through this ACF demonstration project, Louisiana is poised to go beyond the DQC's recommended education data collection agenda and the Forum's data collaboration focusing on the well-being of children, by discussing individual child level data collaborations across all state agencies. Bringing in the state's Departments of Corrections, Health and Hospitals, and Education as well as the Office of Juvenile Justice, the Workforce Investment Council (formally the Workforce Commission), the Board of Regents for Higher Education, and the Picard Center, which is charged with examining children longitudinally, the Louisiana Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) wishes to extend to all stakeholders, including the Louisiana Legislature, an invitation to discuss the benefits and challenges for improving child level well-being data quality, access, and use across all state agencies. This report serves as a starting point to that conversation.

As stated earlier in this document, for low-income children the strength of their educational experience is greatly defined as much by their family's social and fiscal stability as is their classroom experience. This invitation to have a conversation about compiling and monitoring data on all Louisiana children addresses the reality that our educational system cannot provide for children's well-being alone or in isolation of the interventions offered through other state agencies.

Education working in tandem with all aspects of social and public health services will require a new approach to data collection and policy development.

In order to facilitate this conversation, the remainder of this report provides snapshots and examples of how this proposed data collaboration discussion is shaped around what we know about a particular subset of at risk children. These are children whose fathers live outside of the home and who received assistance through TANF's Fatherhood Initiative to help them provide emotional support as well as to become fiscally responsible for their children. The ultimate goal of this conversation is to build consensus among all stakeholders about the potential use of shared interagency data to create policies that cause systemic changes for improving the outcomes of children's well-being.

A Focus on Children's Well-being is a Non-partisan Agenda

Implementing policies and practices that result in fiscal efficiency and accountability is a non-partisan aspiration among government leaders. All government leaders are charged with the responsibility of making investments in our state's future through the assurances that all children have equal access to a decent quality of life that prepares them to function in a competitive workforce and to become tax-paying citizens who aspire to earn living wages and eventually raise their own children under healthy conditions. Lifting all vulnerable children out of poverty is a strategic investment in our collective economic future. This partnership team has designed this discussion in that spirit and is hopeful that this agenda transcends the political crossfire.

Guiding Questions

As data are presented in this report, several key questions may serve as a guide to understanding the potential need for and the possibilities of establishing a statewide data collaboration agenda:

- Do we need a conversation about developing a statewide interagency collaboration?
- If not, what is the alternative for monitoring the outcomes of vulnerable children?
- How can we expect better outcomes and self-sufficiency for low-income children and families using narrow and myopic data tools that do not comprehensively examine spending on investments aimed at helping citizens become self-sufficient?
- If there is consensus that we do need to have this conversation, how should we start exploring data across agencies to understand the possibilities and implications of how to use the data to make data-informed decisions that will ensure the well-being of children in Louisiana?
- What are the gaps in the data and how these gaps can be filled to present clearer pictures of the children's individual and collective well-being?

Another purpose of this report is to explore the possibilities of tying the impact of a statewide fatherhood intervention program to the outcomes of children's well-being. While the manifestation of that concept may be several years away, this process brings Louisiana much closer to that goal becoming a reality. An assessment report on the outcomes of eight TANF funded Fatherhood

Initiative (FI) programs is on file with DCFS and inspired this exploratory study on the clients' children.

Privacy Considerations and Data Confidentiality Policy

Before examining the data, please note this important statement about federal privacy compliance. Individually identifiable data is necessary in order to match records across multiple data sources. Any administrative data provided by an agency that includes individual records with social security numbers will be matched to other data sources using these social security numbers, but once the match is established, a unique identifier will be created for subsequent storage and analysis. Only authorized employees of the University Partner, the Picard Center, will have access to individual-level data. Under no circumstances will individually identifiable data be transmitted outside the Picard Center unless the requesting agency is the original custodian of said data. All individual-level data will be physically and virtually protected from breaches by way of physically securing the servers on which the data resides and utilizing technologies such as encryption and firewalls.

The Picard Center has performed internal privacy audits and maintains compliance with all federal and state regulations regarding privacy including but not limited to Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA), Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), and Louisiana state regulation RS 51:3074. Data will be under the custodianship of the Picard Center Management Information System (MIS) Director. The U.S. Government Accountability Office recommends that government agencies conduct a privacy impact assessment, which is an internal assessment of how an agency or agencies handle information to:

1) follow federal regulations regarding the privacy of citizens,
2) determine the risks and impact of managing identifiable information electronically, and
3) examine and evaluate safeguards and alternative processes to manage information to minimize privacy risks (Office of Budget Management, 2003).

This process was used on this project and is intended for use in any future continuation of this research genre.

Data Methodology

Information on 2,445 Louisiana children living in vulnerable family circumstances was originally obtained from the Child Support Enforcement Section based on their non-custodial father's participation in one of TANF's Fatherhood Initiative programs, which operated from 2006 – 2009. Once these children were identified, their records were matched with 16 other data bases linked through multiple state agencies in order to compile their collective well-being profile. The following table summarizes the data obtained and the data base that was used. For details on the process used to secure the data, see Appendix 2.

State Agency	Database	Brief Description of Data
Department of Education	1) **SIS:** Student Information System	Demographic data
	2) **LEAP:** LA Educational Assessment Program	4th, 8th, and 10th high stakes testing student data
	3) ***i*LEAP:** Integrated LA Educational Assessment Program	3rd, 5th, 6th, 7th, and 9th grade school student performance tests
	4) **SER:** Special Education Reporting System	Special Education student determinations
	5) **DIBELS;** Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills	Kindergarten - 2nd grade early literacy performance levels
	6) **LA 4**	Enrollment in high quality pre-K program for four year olds
	7) **SPS:** School Performance Scores	School performance indicator of level for Fatherhood kids
	8) **Youth Services:** After school enrichment services	Enrollment and attendance in after school programs
Picard Center	9) **CSH:** Fitness Grams	Body Mass Index of FI children in participating public school districts
Office of Youth Development	10) OJJ	Minors who have been under the Jurisdiction of the Office of Juvenile Justice (OJJ)
Department of Children and Family Services	11) Foster Care	History of Foster Care services or out-of-home placement
	12) TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families)	Cash assistance and other non-monetary services for assisting families
	13) TANF Fatherhood Initiative Grantees	List of Fatherhood Initiative Participants
	14) Child Support Enforcement: Child support obligations and pay	Non-Custodial parents' payment histories and their children's data
Department of Health & Hospitals	15) Child Support Enforcement access to current DHH data	Medicaid or LaCHIP enrollment of Fatherhood Initiative children
Louisiana Supreme Court	16) Families in Need of Services (FINS)	History of children from families who have received either informal or formal assistance through FINS

Study Limitations

Unfortunately, only a little over half (1,358) of the 2,445 Fatherhood Initiative children were matched in the state's Student Information System (SIS) and other data bases for review. The purpose of this Demonstration Project is to establish data collection and analysis processes for studying children who live in vulnerable families that rely on multiple government services and interventions in order to subsist. Because these children are growing up in stressful and unstable environments, government services are intended to ensure their well-being as a humanitarian effort aimed at building their capacity to reduce their reliance on public assistance throughout the course of their lives as well as ensuring that they are equipped to become contributing tax payers. As a result of these services, public savings are realized in concert with crime reduction, thereby improving the quality of life for all citizens.

Yet if these public services are not coordinated and monitored for outcomes, the state's investments in these children's well-being may be limited and/or diminished. While the coordination of services among multiple state agencies may be considered unrealistically ambitious, other states have demonstrated that it is possible (Gardiner & Turner, 2006). Limited financial resources dictate that even a minimal level of coordination that is strategic and based on individual-level data may be necessary to ensure the well-being of all citizens.

At the federal level, the human services community has forwarded a national agenda on the coordinated Systems of Care model, whose history stems from the 1975 Individuals with Disabilities Act. This evidence-based model is designed to improve the availability of and access to high quality mental health services to children and families that have severe mental illness issues. It is also designed to reduce service and funding fragmentation through multi-agency resource and responsibility sharing as well as improve the skills, knowledge, and attitudes among frontline service providers who interact with families from an asset-based rather than deficit-based perspective. Family members are treated as stakeholders in the intervention process and a strong emphasis is placed on evaluation and system outcomes. This service delivery model is being extended to serve children in the welfare system because of "the documented need for a more comprehensive strategy to support children, youth, and families in areas of safety, permanency, and well-being" (Children's Bureau, 2009, p. 3).

In 2009, Louisiana's Department of Children and Family Services embraced the national Systems of Care (SoC) model by partnering with multiple state agencies and numerous community based organizations to develop the state's SoC service strategy. This ACF demonstration project is an extension of the Department's commitment to implementing that service model by applying it to subpopulations such as the TANF and Child Support Enforcement clientele who also require support services from multiple state agencies.

Study Design and Report Format

Although dozens of data sets were collected and analyzed for this project on the 1,358 Fatherhood Initiative children found in SIS, significantly fewer data sets were collected and analyzed for the 1,087 children not identified in SIS, and only one year of data was reported on the 1,358 FI children in this study. Although five years of data were available on most of the children, only one year of data became the primary focus of this exploratory study so that the ACF partnership team could design a guide for using child individual-level data utilizing the Forum's well-being model. This research project could be used as a template for future studies on low-income children whose families depend on government assistance in order to subsist.

It should be noted that the research team chose to use free lunch public school students as a comparison group in areas where the comparative data were available. There are conflicting concerns associated with using this comparison group because it includes such a wide range of children whose family household incomes may be significantly below or as high as 130% of the federal poverty guidelines (Harwell & LeBeau, 2010). Yet this group is used because the only other appropriate comparison group would have been CSE children whose non- custodial fathers were not in the FI Program, but time constraints on TANF's end, Child Support Enforcement's data end, and the Picard Center's end precluded our doing so.

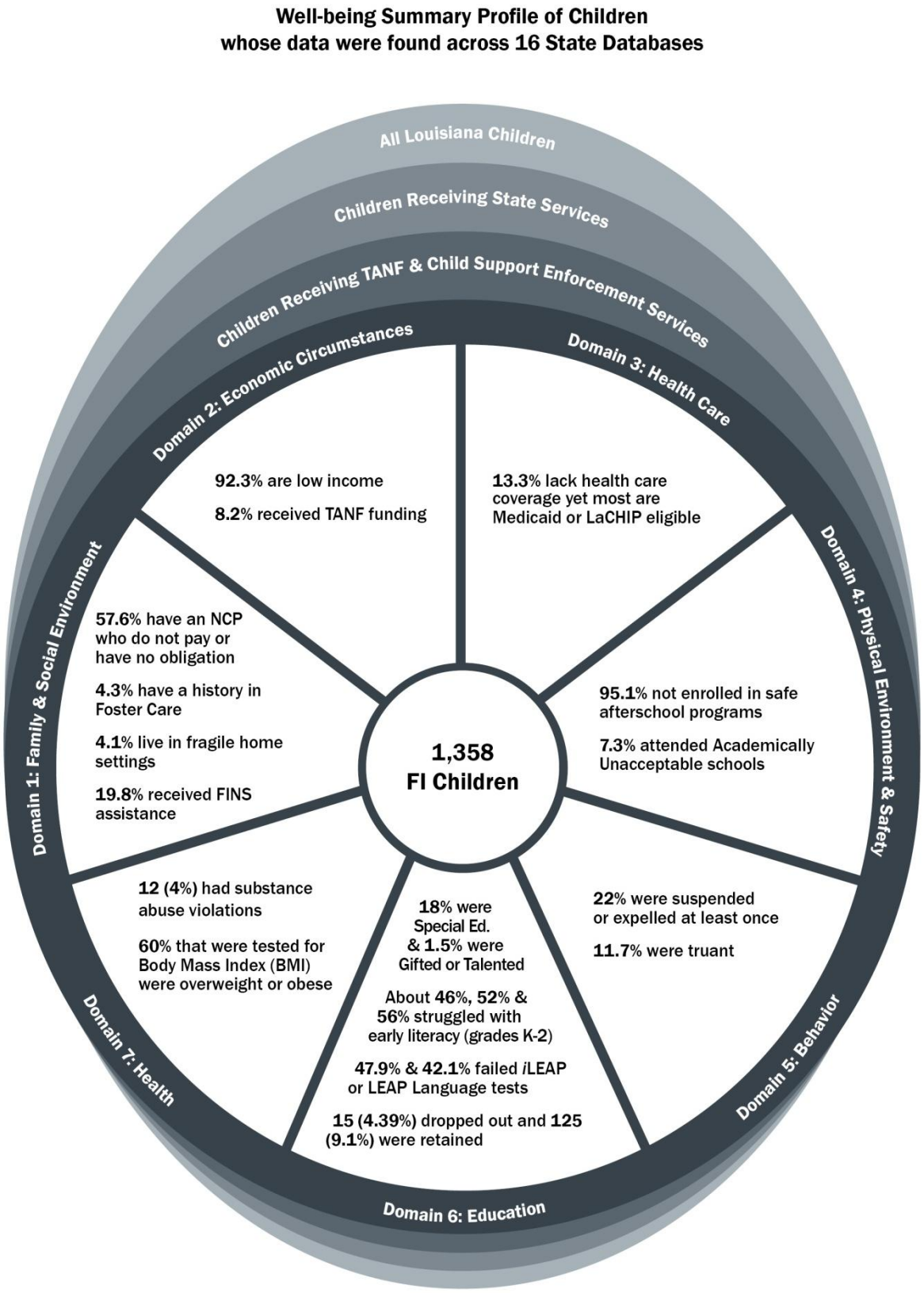
One of the disadvantages of using the statewide free lunch population as a comparison group is that it is a disproportionately large population that is examined next to very small subsets of the FI children. For example, there were 15 (or 4.39%) FI children who dropped out of school in the 2008-09 school year compared to 5,073 (or 3.59 %) of free lunch children statewide. The research team however felt that the discussion required a comparison group to be used as a context for examining the well-being status of FI kids. In many instances, these FI children's risk factors mirror those of free lunch children in Louisiana. One example is eligibility for Louisiana's Child Health Insurance Program (LaCHIP) that serves children whose families are at 130% of poverty, which is comparable to the free lunch eligibility guidelines. Another reason for using the free lunch children statewide as a comparison group is that this is an exploratory research project and the outcomes are not at all conclusive, nor are they intended to be statistically representative of all children in the TANF and Child Support Enforcement subpopulations. Finally, all of the FI children had non-custodial fathers who were at risk of losing contact with their children because of their low-income status. Their children's dependence on their fathers' fiscal and emotional support put them at a similar level of risk as free lunch children because of their families low-income. Above all, the comparison group serves as a guide or consideration for how future studies may be designed using data from a representative group that is more suitable for comparison.

Also note that Appendix 6 provides a general review about the state's educational testing process and acronyms that may be less familiar to audiences outside of the Department of Education. Appendix 8 provides a listing of all sources of data used in the charts and maps in this report.

Why Emphasis was placed on Non-Custodial Fathers' Child Support Activity

One of the challenges of this report is to demonstrate the well-being of FI children in the context of their fathers' child support obligation and payment. This challenge influenced how this exploratory research project was designed. While the research on factors that influence child support payments is sometimes conflicting, more of the research supports the idea that a non-custodial father's emotional and financial support cannot function independently as they are interconnected. The goal of public assistance programming is to help families, which include both custodial and non-custodial parents, work together to raise their children despite the dissolution of their relationships and to also ensure that their children are developmentally and emotionally healthy. For an overview of six years of child support obligation and payment activities of 534 TANF funded FI clients and the 1,174 cases tied to them, see Appendix 1.

Figure 1. Fatherhood Initiative Children's Well-Being at a Glance (n=1,358)

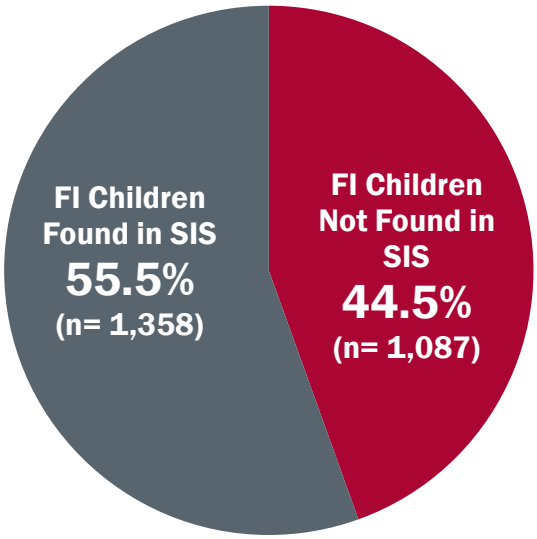


Key Indicators of Well-being among a Subset of Children of Non-custodial Fathers

Shaping social programs and policies that improve the lives of everyone in our state begins with understanding the demographic profile of children living in vulnerable family environments. For the purpose of this project, the focus began on 2,445 children whose fathers participated in TANF's Fatherhood Initiative program at varying points during 2006 – 2009. The children were identified through Child Support Enforcement records and each child was identified first in the Louisiana Department of Education's Student Information System (SIS) in order to obtain school performance and data from several databases from five other state agencies as mentioned earlier in this report. See Appendix 2 for details on how data on these children were obtained.

After the search for these 2,445 children's education data, more than half or 55.5% were identified as seen in the figure below. For the remainder of this report, data on 1,358 children were used to present a broad picture of the well-being of FI children. Approximately 100 other children were identified using a logarithmic computational process, which required more time. Those children's data were not included in this report since there was not time within the scope of this project to verify their records. This extra step must be taken into consideration in future projects with an appropriate time frame allotted for adjustments to secure the highest match percentages of children possible.

Figure 2. Identifiable Records of 2,445 Children Examined in this Study



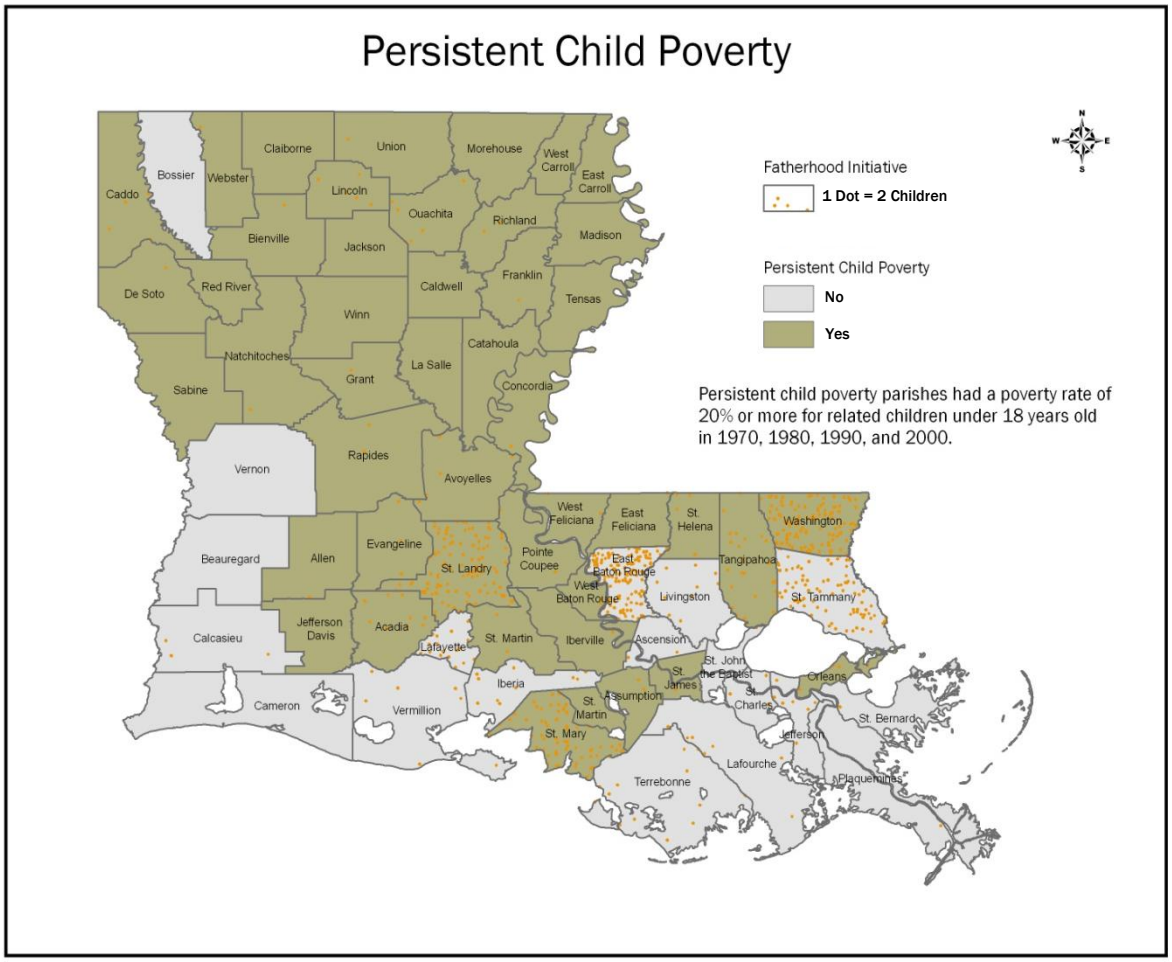
Nearly all of these children, whether they faced one or more risk factors outlined in this report, are on the verge of facing multiple risk factors that ensure the likelihood that their well-being will be compromised at various points throughout their childhood. They become especially vulnerable if they live in family situations where their stability fluctuates in any one of the seven domains

outlined in this report. However, one of the purposes of this demonstration project is to provide Louisiana with a data gathering process for monitoring the well-being of children who live in vulnerable family conditions which may be ameliorated through state assistance leveraged across agencies that are designed to ensure their long term well-being.

Demographic Background

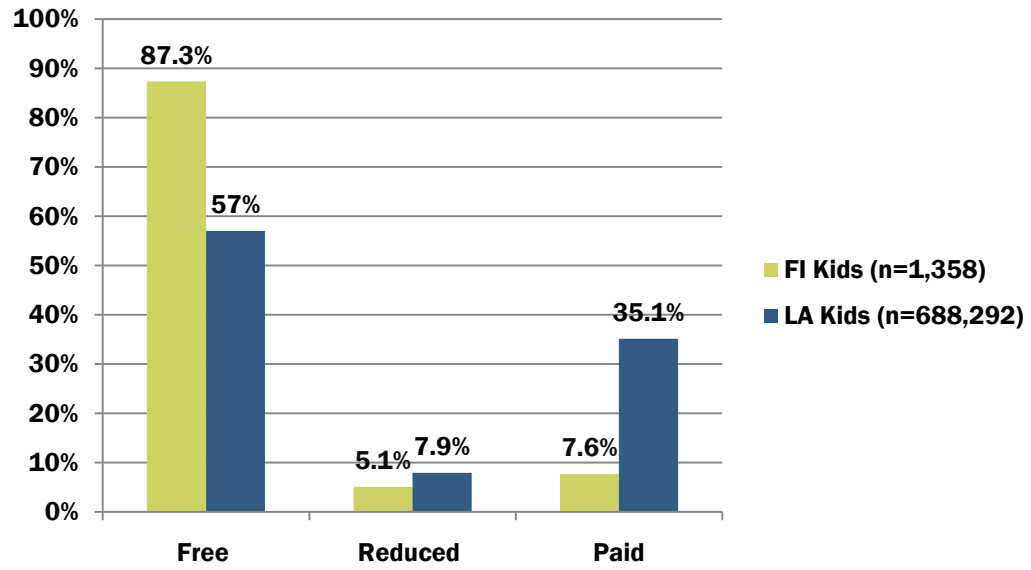
Understanding the unique demographic profile of the 1,358 Fatherhood Initiative children whose data we were able to obtain is critical in shaping how our state responds to the needs of this subpopulation of vulnerable children. As our state gains a better understanding of the unique needs of these children based on their ethnic, social, and financial background, we can learn more about how to leverage investments that ensure their well-being with the goal of strengthening Louisiana and its economy. When these children overcome their social and economic challenges and perform well in school, they are on the right path that leads them towards self-sufficiency despite their disadvantaged background. Most of the FI children in this report were not only low-income but they also lived in parishes that consistently had high child poverty rates as the next figure shows.

Figure 3. Map of Persistent Child Poverty and the School Locations of FI Children



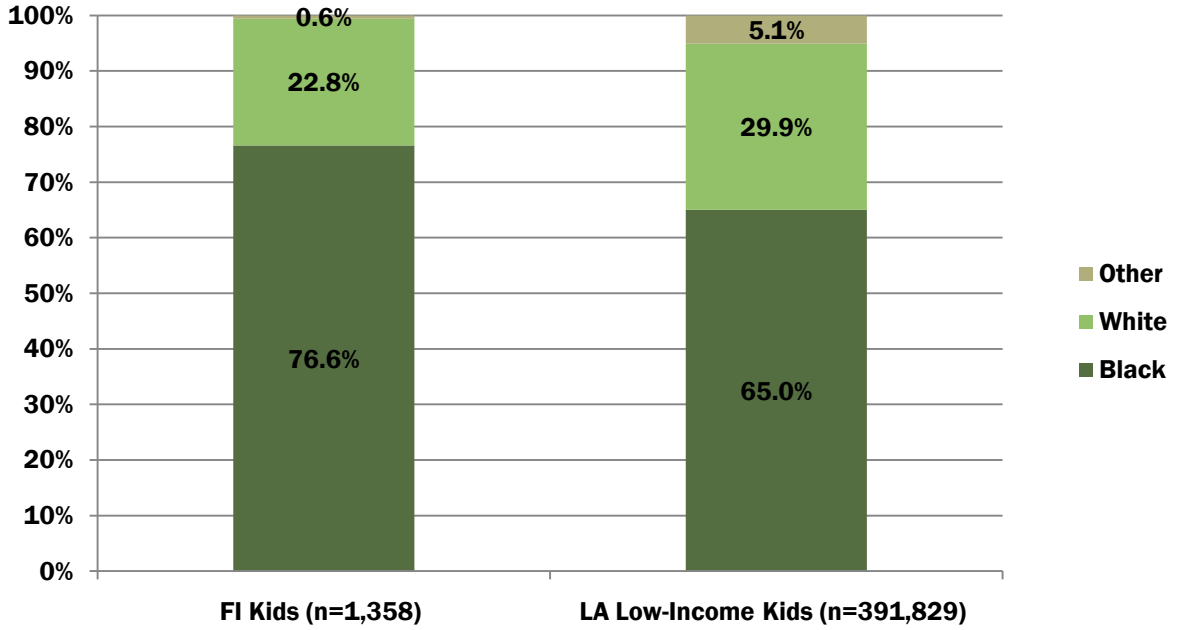
The next three figures show that a disproportionate percentage of Fatherhood Initiative children were low-income, black, and male. The first of the three figures that show it is clear an overwhelming majority of Fatherhood initiative children were low-income especially when combining the free lunch and reduced lunch group, which is 92.4% compared to only 64.9% of children statewide. Using the statewide free lunch population of students as a comparison group serves as a reference point and gives a context for the status of Fatherhood Initiative children. With 92.4% of the FI children receiving free/reduced lunch and only 7.6% paying, clearly demonstrates that a large majority of this population of children live in poverty. However it should be noted that this free lunch population is in no way intended to serve as a representative comparison group since nothing is known about these children's family and parental structure and it is not used when examining children's non-custodial fathers' child support payments.

Figure 4. Overall Income of Fatherhood Initiative Children Based on Lunch Status



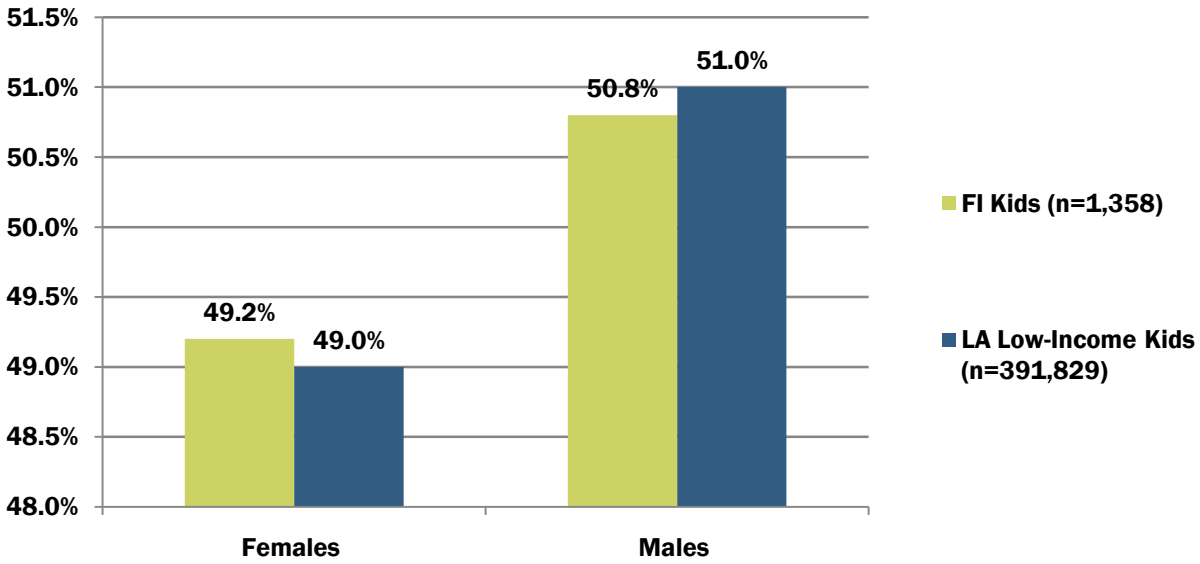
The first of the next three figures illustrates that black children formed the largest proportion of the group where more than three in every four were minorities, a fact that could put them at additional risk simply due to their race and the experiences of being a minority. Compared to all other Louisiana public school children, less than half were black, suggesting that the Fatherhood Initiative children collectively were more at risk than children statewide based on race alone.

Figure 5. Overall Race of Fatherhood Initiative Children and LA Low-Income Children



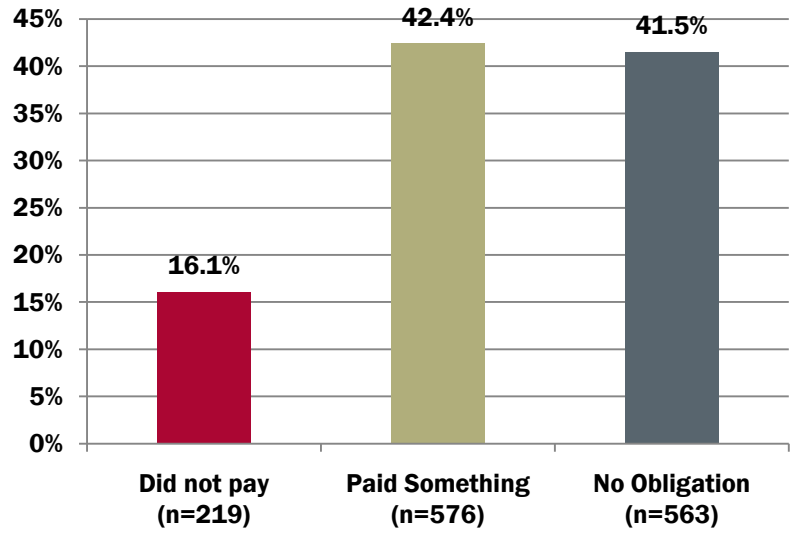
The distribution of Fatherhood Initiative children by gender in the figure below shows that there was almost an even distribution of each gender, although the majority was male. Interestingly their overall gender profile was very similar to low-income public school children in the rest of the state.

Figure 6. Overall Gender of Fatherhood Initiative Children and LA Low-Income Children



Finally, the next demographic figure represents the child support payment status based on the father's child support obligation data obtained from Child Support Enforcement. Each of the fathers had a child support case on file, yet many were fathers who had no obligations during the same period but had a child support history on file with Child Support Enforcement. This group was almost the same size as the number and percentage of fathers who paid something towards their child support orders. It should be noted that many of these cases classified as no obligation are very complex and a variety of reasons are associated with their not having child support obligations. As long as the custodial parent does not require certain state support such as TANF or Medicaid health insurance, or does not request assistance in obtaining child support from the Child Support Enforcement Section, many fathers who should be paying are not being forced to do so, or they may have informal payment agreements with the custodial parent.

Figure 7. Overall Fatherhood Initiative Non-Custodial Parent Child Support Payments



At first glance, the above chart suggests that overall, only a small percentage of the 1,358 children, 16.1%, are living in vulnerable conditions due to their fathers not paying child support. It may also appear puzzling that such a significant percentage of children, 41.5% had fathers who had no child support obligation during 2008-2009, despite having been identified in the Child Support Enforcement data base as having received Fatherhood Initiative assistance designed to help them to recognize the importance of meeting the financial and emotional needs of their children. While this was not the primary focus of this study, investigations into these cases warranted more attention.

Therefore, we conducted a brief and random inquiry into several of these cases. It was determined that most of these no obligation classifications represent the most vulnerable of children who had multiple layers of complications between their custodial and non-custodial parents that go beyond the complications of just living in low-income homes. Our inquiry resulted in a large variation of

reasons that might explain why the "no obligation" cases were not classified as "Did not pay" or "Paid Some" towards their child support enforcement obligations. The following scenarios serve as examples of how complicated these cases get, and therefore result in a designation in the no obligation category:

- Custodial mothers are either pressured or persuaded by the non-custodial fathers to *not* pursue child support with some suspected of concealing intimate relationships with their children's non-custodial fathers
- Custodial mothers go back and forth between choosing to seek or not seek the state's help with securing child support
- Custodial mothers go through periods of not utilizing specific state assistance such as welfare, kinship care, or Medicaid coverage that requires Child Support Enforcement to secure reimbursements to the state from the non-custodial fathers
- Paternity issues are disputed and tied up in lengthy determination periods
- The state has exhausted all resources to find men who are suspected of being the biological father but whose paternity of the children has not been formally established Parents or relatives of custodial mothers acquire custody of the children and these grandparents do not rely on government or non-custodial parents' assistance.
- The fathers are incarcerated and other complications result in no orders being established
- Obligations and arrearage for 2008-2009 are posted electronically in subsequent fiscal years for various reasons which include complications associated with questioning paternity that was established in previous years; indicating that a lack of real-time establishment of obligation and payment data that further obscures the multi-levels of complications faced by some families
- Some custodial mothers are in new relationships and do not want to have ties to the non-custodial fathers for a variety of reasons
- Child support orders may have taken more than one fiscal year to establish and arrearage for one year may not be reflected until subsequent years. For example: A non-custodial father may have had an active case in 2008-09 with *no obligation* posted that year, but the following year will show an obligation for 2008-09 during the 2009-10 fiscal year.

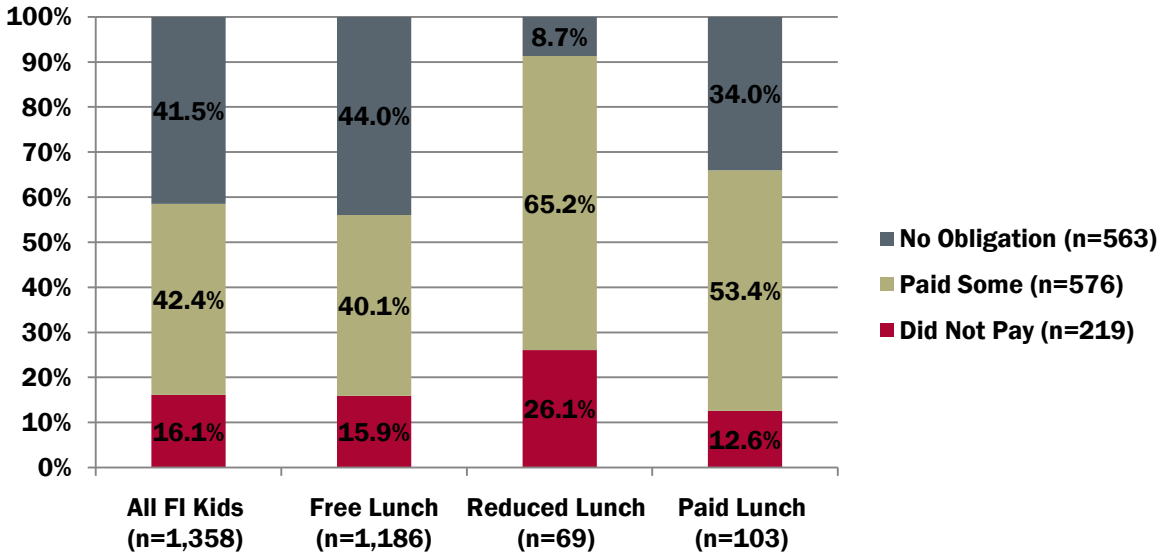
Ultimately, a large majority of the cases labeled "No Obligation" essentially means that the non-custodial fathers and custodial mothers lead such complicated lives that their child support histories are too complicated to decipher from year to year and are better understood in multi-year case studies. For the purpose of this demonstration project, the main focus was to monitor the well-being of children who fall into this category based on both their custodial and non-custodial parents' ability to provide for them. More needs to be understood about how these parents combine resources or compensate for a lack of resources to provide for their children (Ashiabi, 2007; Beadle, 2006).

If a large number of custodial mothers are being persuaded or coerced into avoiding needed government assistance so that non-custodial fathers are not pressured to pay child support by Child

Support Enforcement may explain why such a large portion of low-income children in Louisiana are not enrolled in needed services despite the fact that they are eligible. This issue is further discussed later in this report under the "Well-Being Domain section labeled: Health Care". See Roff, Zhao & Lugo-Gil, 2009 for more information about child support policy factors that encourage an underground economy for low-income families.

These complications associated with no obligation cases remained a compelling undercurrent theme throughout this report, especially when considering that a large percentage of these children are classified as living at or below 130% of the poverty level based on receiving free lunch. The next figure shows the children's lunch status in the context of their fathers' child support obligation and payment status as well as in comparison to all children in the FI group. Again, the complications faced by children of fathers in the "No Obligation" category are evident due to the fact that such a large percentage of them, 44%, received free lunch despite the fact that their father had no child support obligations. It is difficult to understand how so many children living with a custodial parent could qualify for free lunch, yet have a non-custodial father who has no child support obligation to help support them financially. This is especially a concern since much of the research ties a father's payments to his emotional involvement with his child/children and a lack of payment is also strongly tied to a lack of emotional involvement as well.

Figure 8. School Lunch Status of FI Children and NCP Pay



All of these FI children share some of the same risks based on the following factors:

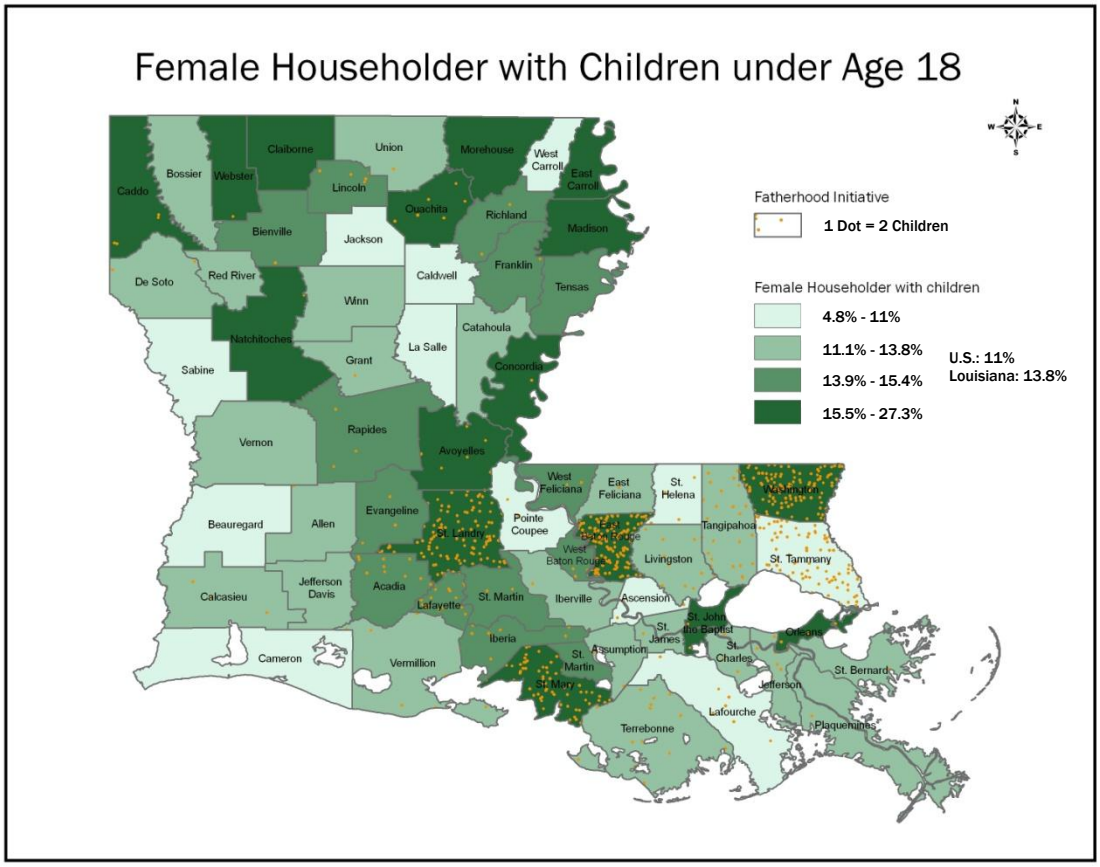
- They live in homes where the father is absent;
- They live in low-income homes; and
- A large percentage are African American males who are historically shown at higher risk in education failure data, unemployment, poor health data, and in criminal justice system statistics.

Well-Being Domain 1: Family and Social Environment

If children are to develop properly, their parents must have the parenting skills and resources to nurture and protect them. Many children face long-term problems because they live in family and social environments that put their healthy child development at further risk. Like the national Forum's report, this study describes the living arrangements of Fatherhood Initiative children that fundamentally impact their well-being in many ways. In this section, data show the home and community living conditions that may jeopardize the FI children's well-being.

Since the 1970's we have known that being a single parent, especially a single mother, is a determining factor that negatively affects children's well-being. Even though individual-level data is lacking regarding mothers' current marital or cohabitating status, a majority of these FI children are more than likely living in single parent homes that are low-income since more than nine out of every ten of them received free or reduced lunch. These facts will be discussed more fully in the next domain that examines the economic circumstances under which these children are living, but the figure below reveals the high concentration of FI children in parishes with extremely high rates of single parent households.

Figure 9. FI Children in Parishes with High Rates of Single Parent Households.

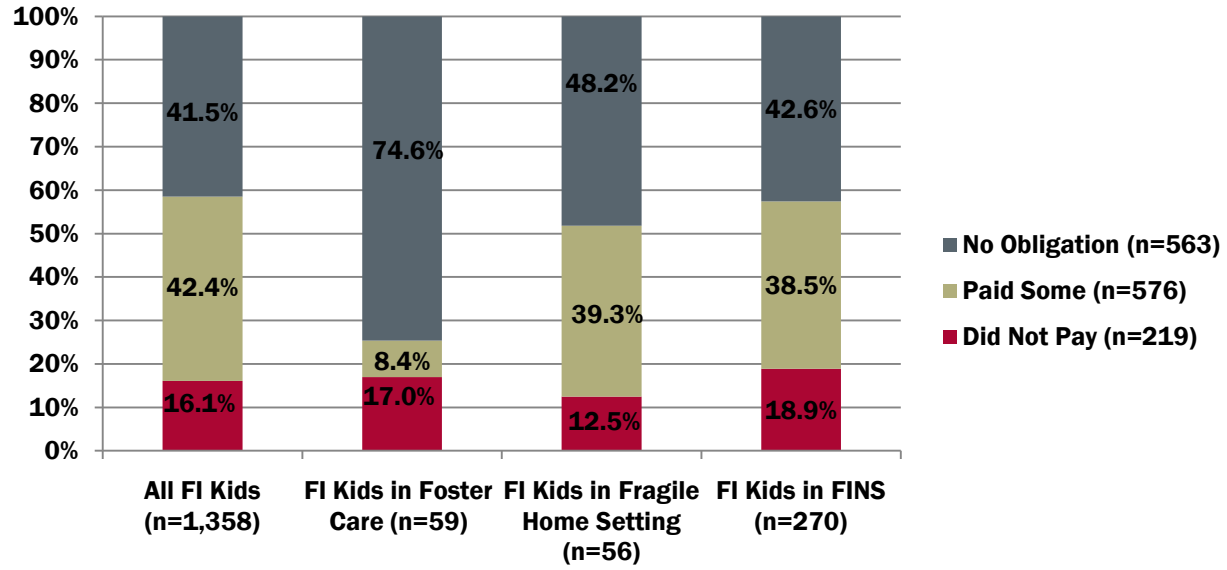


In addition to the risks associated with not growing up in a two parent family, nearly seven in ten of the FI children have additional layers of risk based on their living conditions. About 66.7% (or 906) of the 1,358 FI children faced further risk factors in at least one of four areas because:

- their non-custodial parent had no obligation or did not pay child support,
- they lived in foster care,
- they lived in fragile home settings because their family was homeless, their homes consisted of multiple family households, or because they lived in housing provided by FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency), or
- their family required severe interventions through the Families in Need of Services program referred to as FINS.

Each of these risk factors will be examined individually and later in this report; however an initial review of these factors as shown in the following figure demonstrates how they shape children's outcomes in the well-being domain of Family and Social Environment. The data are presented in comparison to the overall FI group and in the context of the father's child support obligation and payment for 2008-2009.

Figure 10. Multiple Family Risk Factors at a Glance



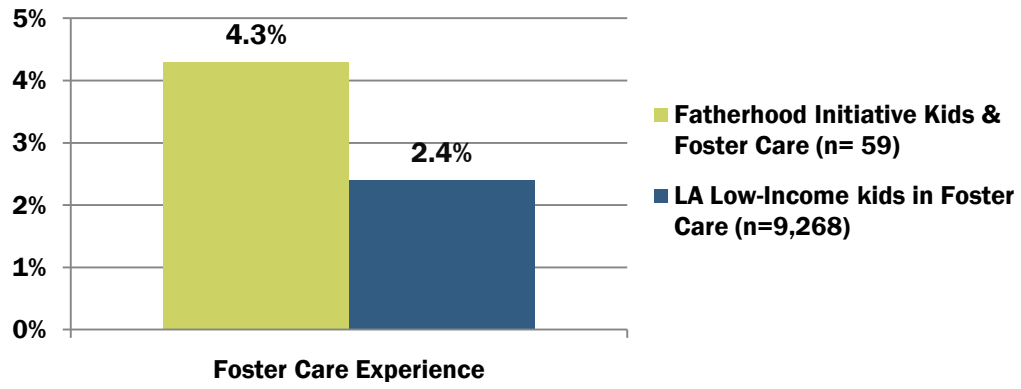
Note in the previous figure that children whose fathers had no child support obligation during 2008-2009 made up nearly seventy-five percent of the foster care children and almost half of the children living in fragile home settings. Those are significantly higher percentages of fathers with no obligations than those in the overall FI group. Just as alarming is that almost half or 48.2% of the 56 FI children who were in households with fragile family settings, most of which were in doubled up families, had fathers with no child support obligations. More qualitative inquiry may shed light on specific factors that contribute towards the father's no obligation child support status, especially since their children were in dire need of their financial support. Meanwhile, these data

suggest that a disproportional large percentage of low-income children who have low-income non-custodial fathers are at further risk of losing financial and emotional support from their fathers.

Foster Care

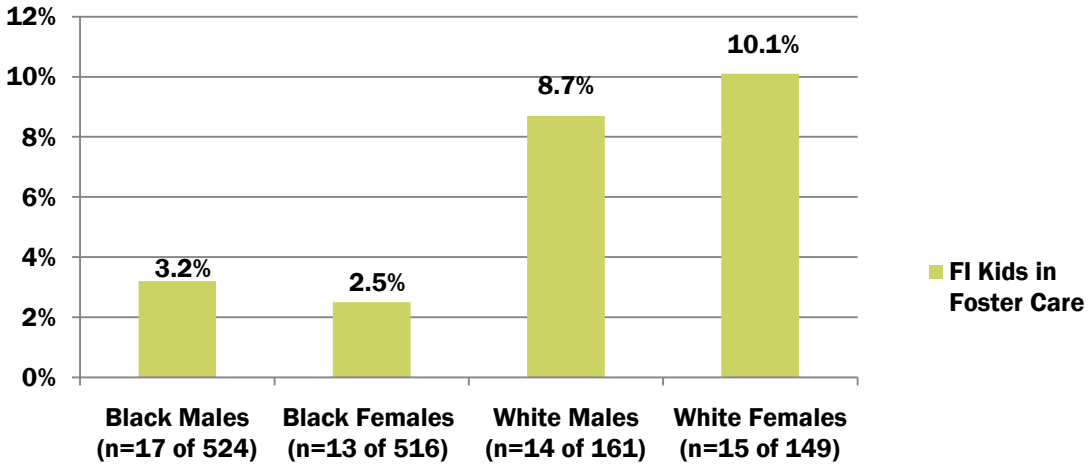
Being placed in the custody of the Foster Care system is a very serious indicator of children who are growing up in unstable family and social environments which may contribute to poor well-being outcomes. Taking a closer look at the 59 FI children who encountered the Foster Care system, 4.3%, were in Foster Care as compared to 2.4% for low-income children statewide as presented in the next figure.

Figure 11. FI Children and LA Low-Income Children with Foster Care Experience



Of the 59 FI children in Foster Care, the next two chart show the number and distribution of these children by race and gender and then their father's payment in comparison to FI children not in foster care. As seen previously in Figure 10 and as will be seen later in Figure13, an overwhelming majority of those kids—almost three out of four, had fathers who had no child support obligation in 2008-2009.

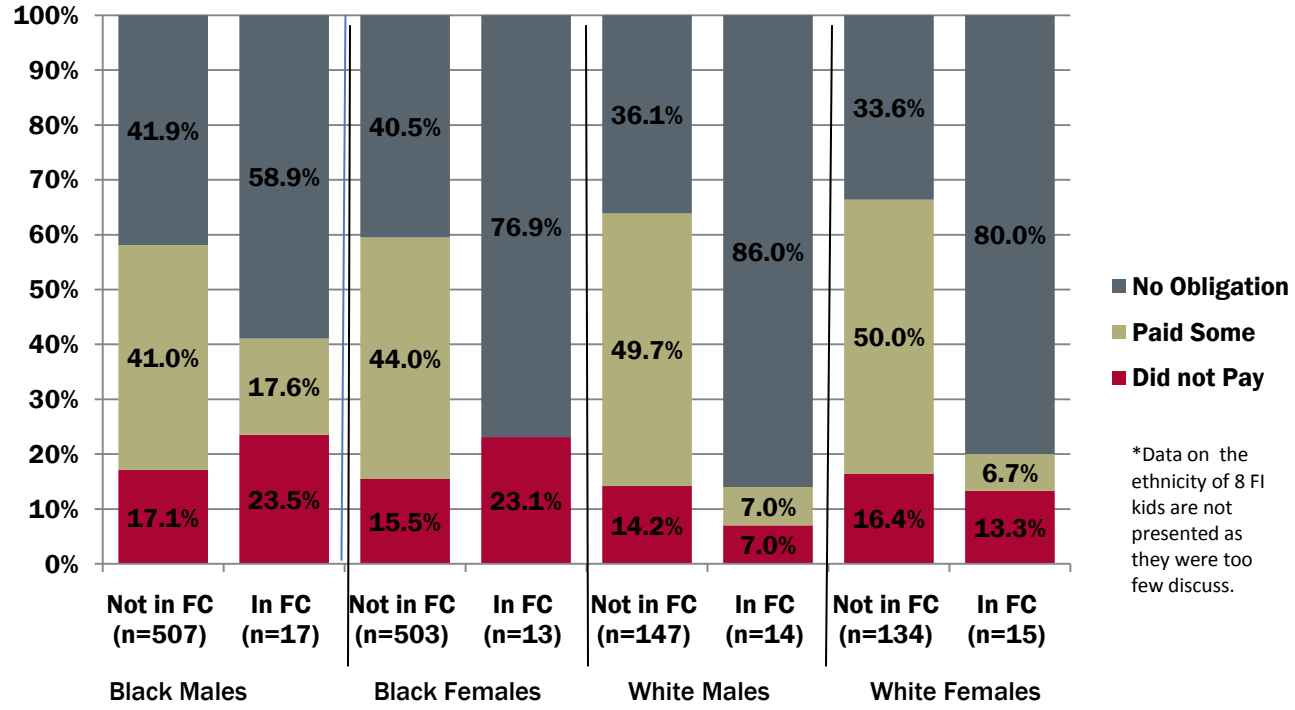
Figure 12. FI Children's Foster Care Participation by Race & Gender



At first glance, the distribution appears somewhat equal among all four race and gender groups of FI children in Foster Care in terms of their numbers. Perhaps this is the case largely due to the relatively small group of 59 children in Foster Care when compared to the entire FI group of 1,358 kids. However, the 59 children represent the entire subset of FI children who were placed in the state's custody. With that in mind, both FI white males and white females seem to be proportionately most in need of state services through the foster care system. Usually minority children are more susceptible to being placed in foster care as their minority status is often linked to other influencing risk factors such as poverty. For the 59 Fatherhood Initiative children who were placed in foster care, white males and females were represented in disproportionately larger percentages than what they were represented in the overall FI group where there were almost four times as many black children as white children whose fathers participated in the Fatherhood Initiative. This data seems to indicate that although non-custodial parents of white males and females were less likely to be enrolled in fatherhood programs, they seemed to have had children with a significantly greater chance of being placed in foster care than were African American children who faced more risk factors overall.

Again this same point is made as the non-custodial parents' child support payments are reviewed in the chart below. It is clearly demonstrated once again that white males and females have a higher percentage of fathers who either have no obligation or did not pay, perhaps further suggesting that white children who enter the Foster Care system are children with multiple risks.

Figure 13. NCP Pay Comparison between FI Children in and not in Foster Care by Gender & Race*



Children Living in Fragile Home Settings

The data on 1,358 children whose fathers are at risk of not contributing to their lives financially and emotionally show that the well-being of sub groups of these children are not being offset by their family and social settings. About 10% of them are living in vulnerable family settings that may suggest they are not receiving the nurturing or resources from extended family or community that might help to offset their home conditions. Still another 13.5% or eight of the FI children are also as vulnerable, as they were considered truant at school, which is highly connected to the instability of their home conditions. Truancy data will be considered in more detail under another domain of well-being in this report.

Families in Need of Services (FINS)

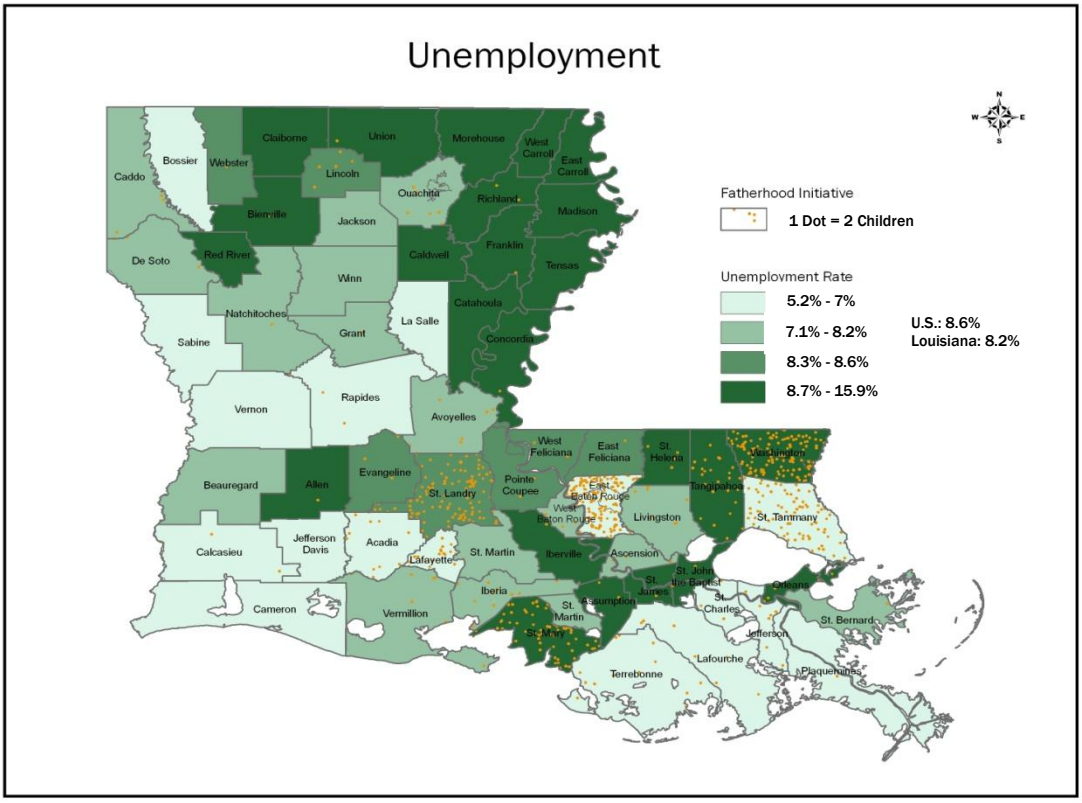
The final indicator in this well-being domain is children whose family members had either an informal or formal encounter with the Families in Need of Services program known as FINS. The FINS program is authorized and overseen by the Louisiana Supreme Court. This program provides mediation between the child's family, the courts, schools, corrections, and social services. A FINS encounter suggests that these children and families are experiencing yet another layer of risk due to multiple family related challenges that result in needed interventions through the judicial system.

There were 270 or 19.9% of FI children who either had a personal encounter with FINS themselves or had a sibling who linked the entire family to services. Given the time and resource limitations of this report, only general information was obtained, and will be presented in a Subpopulation Summary presented later in this report. An encounter with FINS is considered to be a prevention opportunity for parents in regard to abuse and neglect of children. It also gives access to needed social services that prevent juvenile delinquency and is seen as an alternative to incarceration. Review of this data could influence our state's understanding of the kinds of interventions that could directly link a family's environment to a child's well-being.

Other Indicators Needed

Other data elements from the Louisiana Workforce Commission (LWC) could help to identify children whose well-being is further compromised based on their family's living conditions. Unfortunately, due to time and resource constraints of this project, securing and analyzing LWC data was not feasible. Parental employment data from LWC might further define children's well-being based on the stability of their family's income. LWC data on children living in households headed by a custodial parent or supplemented by a non-custodial parent that is not employed or is dependent on unemployment benefits to raise their children present a clearer picture of children's household well-being. Those who are living under such conditions face additional challenges and this simply adds yet another risk factor that threatens their well-being. This next figure clearly demonstrates that most FI children are living in parishes with high unemployment rates that not only exceed the state's but also the national average.

Figure 14. Unemployment Rates and Domicile of FI Children



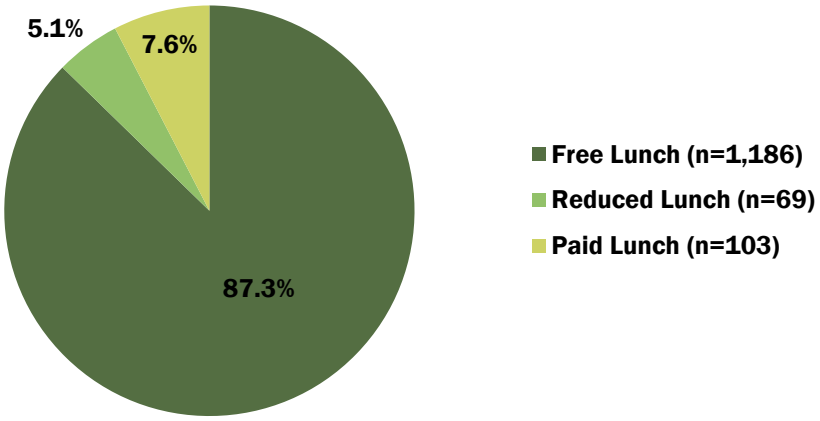
All of the factors that contribute to the unstable living conditions presented in this report often facilitate abuse and neglect (Greenberg et al., 1999) that will subsequently impact how these children will attend school, which will be discussed later. Further complicating the lives of these children is the fact that they all live apart from their fathers, who as non-custodial parents are further challenged to meet their children's basic needs and form loving relationships with them.

Well-Being Domain 2: Economic Circumstances

The persistence of economic insecurity across Louisiana is stark and compelling. Not only was Louisiana's overall poverty rate significantly higher than the US' rate during the period studied, 17.3% compared to 13.8%, so was the state's child poverty rate higher at 24.5% compared to 19.1% nationwide (U.S. Census, 2008-2009). Research tells us that one of the most effective ways to improve people's lives is to help them secure their own assets; thereby reducing welfare dependency and enhancing the quality of life and the economic well-being of children and families (Brooks-Gunn & Duncan, 1997). The Personal Responsibility and Work Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) of 1996 significantly modified how low-income families received cash assistance and how states discouraged welfare dependency. From 2007 – 2009, the TANF-funded Fatherhood Initiative was part of Louisiana's effort to assist low-income families and children whose father's were at risk of not financially and emotionally supporting their basic needs. Overall these programs increased the number of fathers who started or maintained child support payments and had improved relationships with their children (See Appendix 1). Yet many of these children continue to live in poverty and continue to experience many of the poor well-being outcomes associated with poverty as a risk factor. Their well-being depends significantly on the economic resources of their families.

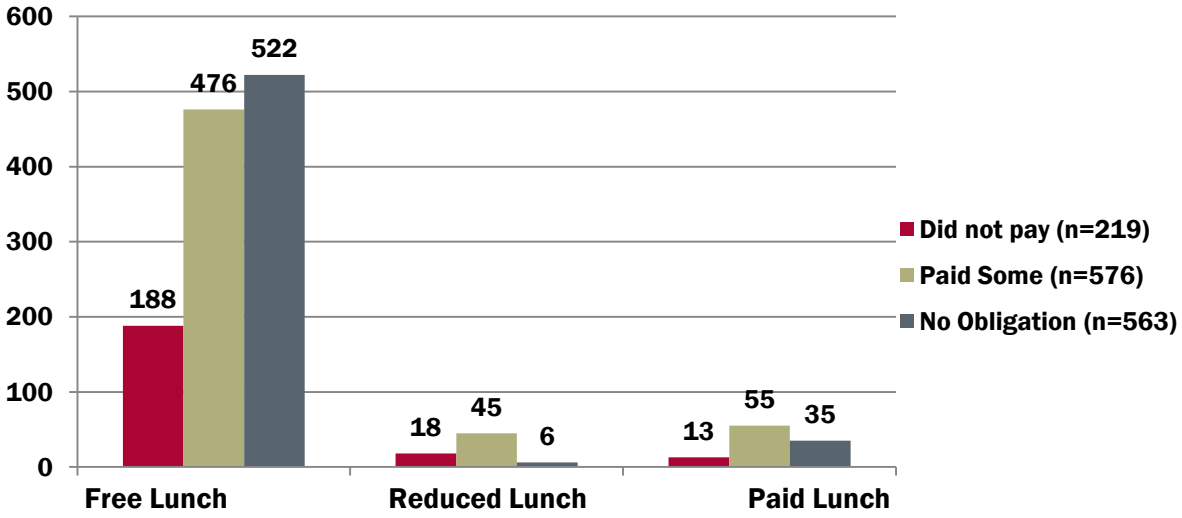
Using free or reduced lunch status as an effective measure of a child's family's economic status has received mixed reviews among educational researchers. Both free and reduced lunch thresholds do not coincide with the Department of Health and Human Services Poverty Guidelines as thresholds. Free lunch is issued to families whose income is up to 130% of poverty and reduced lunch as high as 185% of poverty. However using lunch status as a poverty measure is more acceptable if multiple factors of a child's economic situation are considered (Harwell & LeBeau, 2010). This demonstration project attempts to do just that by looking at multiple areas where a child's well-being may be affected through the seven domains utilized by the Forum's Framework on Child and Family Statistics. The next figure shows that 1,186 or 87.3% of the 1,358 Fatherhood Initiative children received free lunch.

Figure 15. Fatherhood Initiative Children's Family Income Based on School Lunch Status



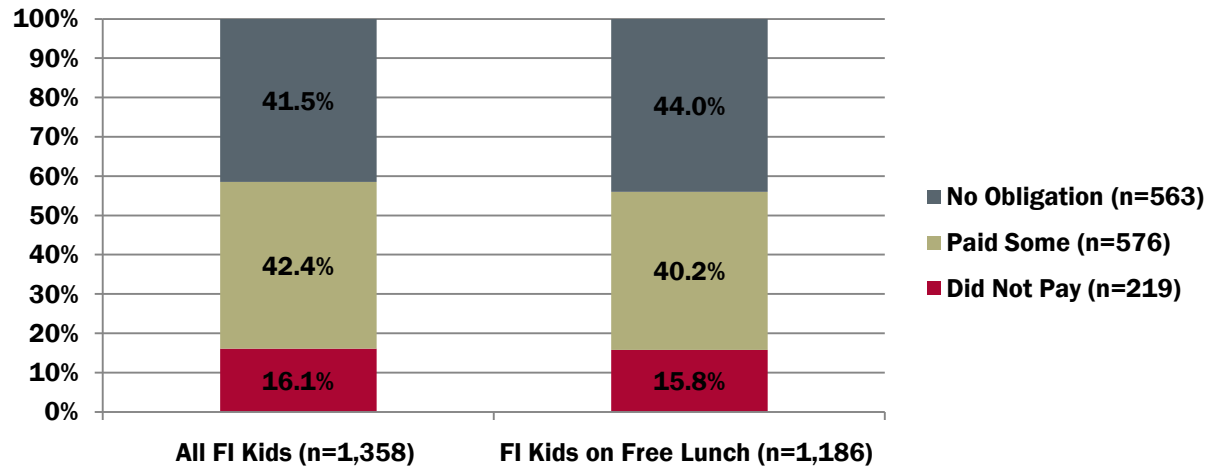
The following figures show the makeup of the FI children based on their school lunch status, which is an indicator of the child's family's income, in the context of the fathers 'child support payments. The first of the next two figures shows children's school lunch status based on their fathers' child support payments for the 2008-09 school year. Of the 1,186 or 87.3% Fatherhood Initiative children who were eligible for and received free lunch that school year, again a disproportionately large number and percentage were children whose fathers paid something towards their obligations or had no obligation that year. Most of the fathers who paid something, paid less than the amount owed which suggests that these fathers are struggling financially themselves. Regarding children whose fathers had no obligation, as mentioned earlier, those children's child support orders were often too complex to determine their father's obligations, or they were not yet defined and possibly tied up in paternity disputes, or their custodial parent was persuaded or coerced into not pursuing child support payments.

Figure 16. School Lunch Status of FI Children and NCP Pay



Clearly most of these free lunch Fatherhood Initiative children are living in families with limited economic resources, which put them at further risk of having positive well-being outcomes. They are especially vulnerable when combined with other risk factors such as living in non-secure family and social environments as explained previously. The next figure shows a comparison between the 1,186 free lunch Fatherhood Initiative children and the fathers of all 1,358 Fatherhood Initiative children based on how they paid child support. While the distribution is very similar among both groups, a larger percentage of children whose fathers had no child support obligation were eligible for free school lunch, 44%.

Figure 17. Free Lunch FI Children Based on NCP Pay



Other data that would help determine the well-being of children based on their family's economic circumstances would be whether or not they are living in homes that have secure food-related resources. If they are living in homes that depend on food stamps, if their custodial parent does not have secure employment, or if they are receiving TANF support, children's well-being may be in flux or compromised. For families that live at or near poverty, even small fluctuations in their family employment or the economy can spur economic instability (Brooks-Gunn & Duncan, 1997).

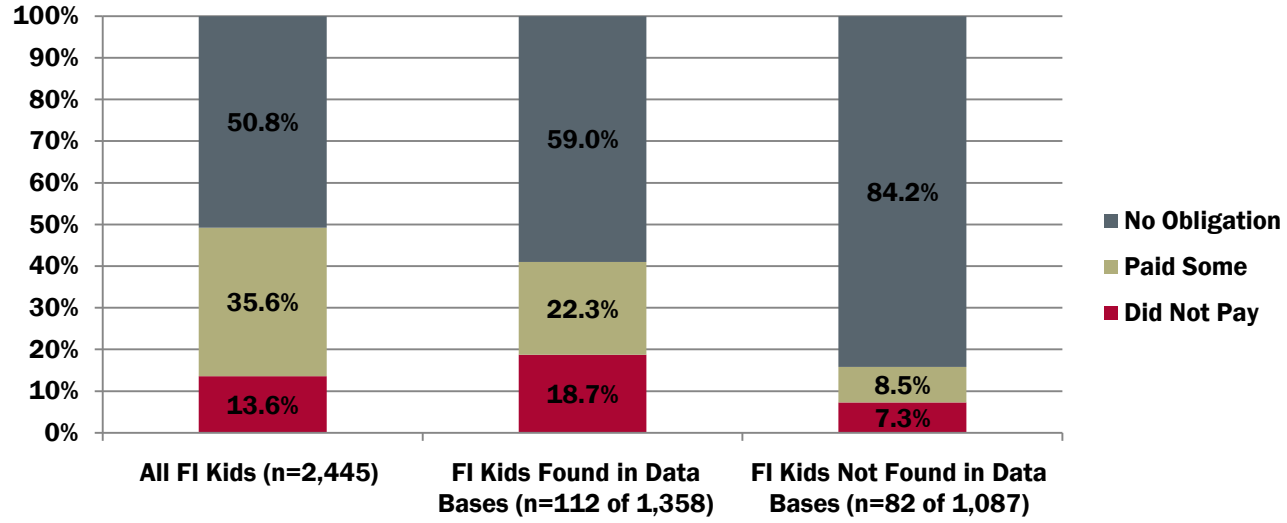
TANF Recipients

Another indicator of a family's financial stability is whether the head of household can generate enough financial resources to provide for their family without having to rely on government assistance. Children, who live in families that depend on temporary cash assistance through TANF, usually do not fare as well in most well-being areas as do children who live in households where parental employment is sufficient to meet the family's basic needs.

More than 8% of the 1,358 FI children (or 112 of the FI children who were found in SIS) received some type of cash assistance from TANF during the 2008-2009 fiscal year under examination. Figure 18 shows a comparison of non-custodial parental child support payments for three FI subgroups: 1) all 2,445 FI children whose child support data was obtained from Child Support

Enforcement, 2) the FI children whose families received TANF support and whose data was found in multiple data bases, and 3) those 82 FI children whose families received TANF cash assistance but whose school and health well-being data was not found in other databases. Most of these children in all groups had fathers who had no child support obligations.

Figure 18. Comparison of Overall FI Children and Subgroups of Recipients of TANF Cash Assistance

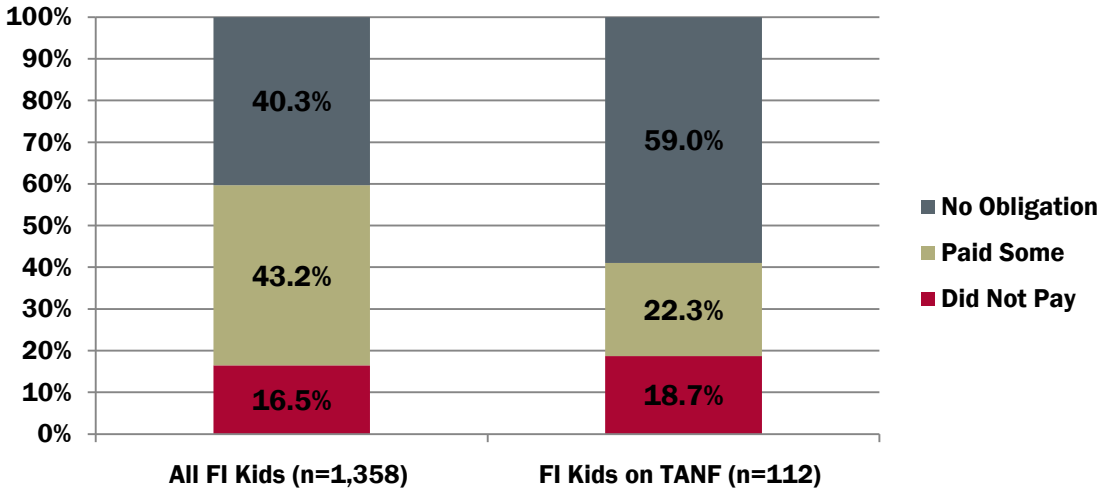


All of the Fatherhood Initiative children had fathers who did not live at home, which complicates children's well-being in many ways. Therefore, as we examined the FI children under the lens of economic circumstances, it became clearly evident that their well-being could be in jeopardy when these factors were taken into consideration:

- A large percentage of them, 87%, were eligible for free lunch;
- All of them were from low-income, single parent homes and are slated based on research to fare less well when compared to children not growing up in poverty and compared to children growing up in poverty but with two parents;
- Many live in homes where their custodial or non-custodial parent is unemployed or under employed, thus adding another layer of risk that makes it harder for them to thrive and develop in a healthy manner.

Even when compared to the overall group of FI children found in SIS, a disproportionately high percentage, 59% (66 of 112), who received TANF had non-custodial parents who were on record as having no child support obligation according to Child Support Enforcement records. The figure below shows the distribution of all 1,358 FI children compared to the 112 TANF FI children in the context of their non-custodial parents' child support payments in 2008-09.

Figure 19. NCP Pay of FI Children found in SIS Compared to Recipients of TANF Cash Assistance



By law, Child Support Enforcement is required to seek child support from the non-custodial parents of children who receive TANF resources. An inquiry into the individual circumstances of the 66 children whose non-custodial parent had no obligation to pay child support confirmed the cooperative efforts between CSE and TANF as well as Child Support Enforcement's attempt to secure child support as mandated by both federal and state laws. This required practice involves a minimum of a 30 – 60 day delay in enforcement due to mandated processing procedures. Often the cases receive further delays if insufficient information is provided to Child Support Enforcement to locate the parent who is presumed obligated to reimburse the state for their child's receipt of TANF resources. However, this inquiry revealed more evidence regarding the layers of complexity associated with these children's child support cases. These scenarios call further attention to the additional risk factors that impact children's well-being and that place them at further risk of developing and thriving in a healthy and secure home and community environment.

For example, of the 66 children who received TANF funds in 2008 and whose fathers had no child support obligation, more than half or 35 of the children's non-custodial parents' no obligation status could be explained. Either these parents obtained joint custody of their children during that year or in the subsequent year and were paying something towards their arrearage, or had updated obligations the subsequent year as a result of Child Support Enforcement's efforts to secure child support payments. However, a variety of complex issues associated with securing child support explain why the remaining 31 of the 66 TANF children's non-custodial parents did not have any child support obligations that year as well as in the subsequent fiscal year. The following list serves as a summary of those reasons:

- The non-custodial father was incarcerated and the case was closed because it met the federal criteria (45 CFR 303.11) associated with Child Support Enforcement's authorization to close cases based on specific criteria that includes the father's inability to pay child or medical support due to no chance of parole or physical or mental disabilities

- The child's custodial parent was also incarcerated and failed to cooperate with Child Support Enforcement
- NCPs may have attempted to qualify for and/or were in the process of paternity dis-establishment under Louisiana Revised Statues 9:399.1 and 9:406.
- Inconsistencies in documenting information electronically made the status on many cases inconclusive; only hard copy case files might have provided more clarity but was not feasible to obtain for this project
- In some instances, child support cases were not officially opened until the subsequent year under study
- At some point the custodial parents refused to cooperate and any initial claims against potential non-custodial fathers had to be dropped
- In a few cases, the non-custodial parent was unemployed or underemployed and qualified for food stamps or disability.

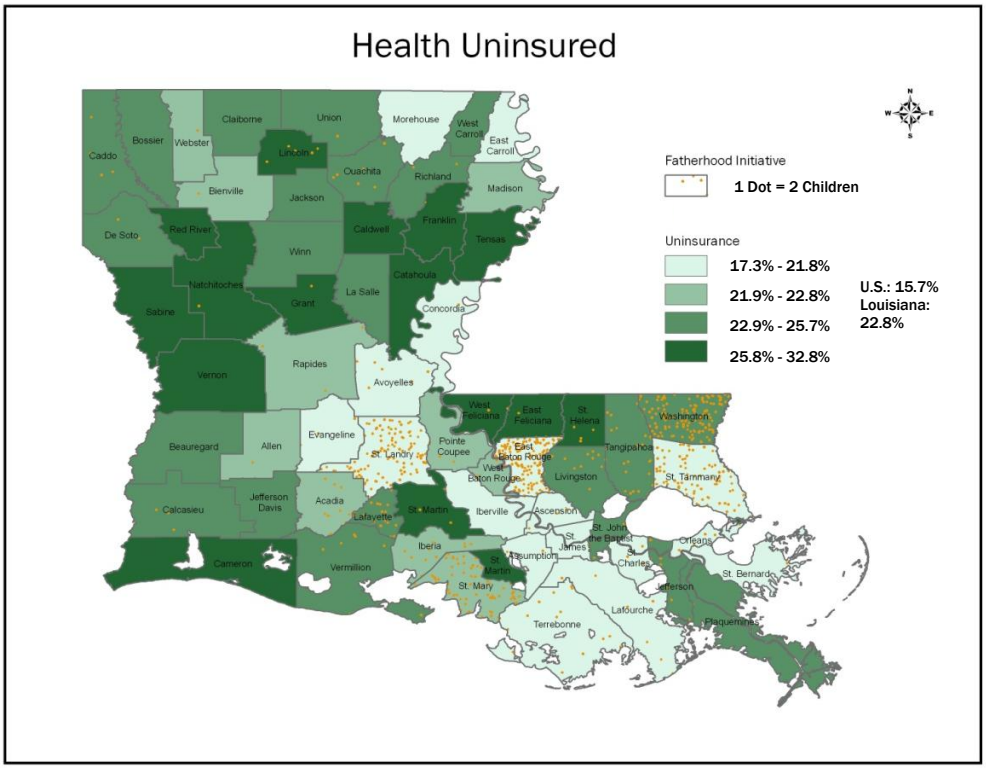
Regardless of the reasons that non-custodial parents did not have any obligations towards their children's financial and emotional welfare according to Child Support Enforcement records, this investigation presents a glimpse of the multiple factors that complicate and threaten the well-being of low-income children who are not growing up in two parent families or economically stable home environments. More in depth research is needed in this area.

Well-Being Domain 3: Health Care

Health insurance coverage plays a critical role in promoting the health and well-being of low-income, high risk children who face multiple risk factors. A RAND Corporation study showed that government-funded health insurance improved the overall quality of life for low-income children (Seid, Varni, Cummings & Schonlau, 2006). The study emphasized that these low-income children performed better in school, felt physically better, and had improved interactions with their peers. In a press release, the main author was quoted as saying, "We as a society have invested a lot of money to provide insurance to children and there is still doubt about whether the money is well-spent–this report however shows the public and policymakers that the money is making a difference in kids' lives. It makes a tremendous and important difference to children to get the care they need" (Seid, 2006, Press Release, para.5).

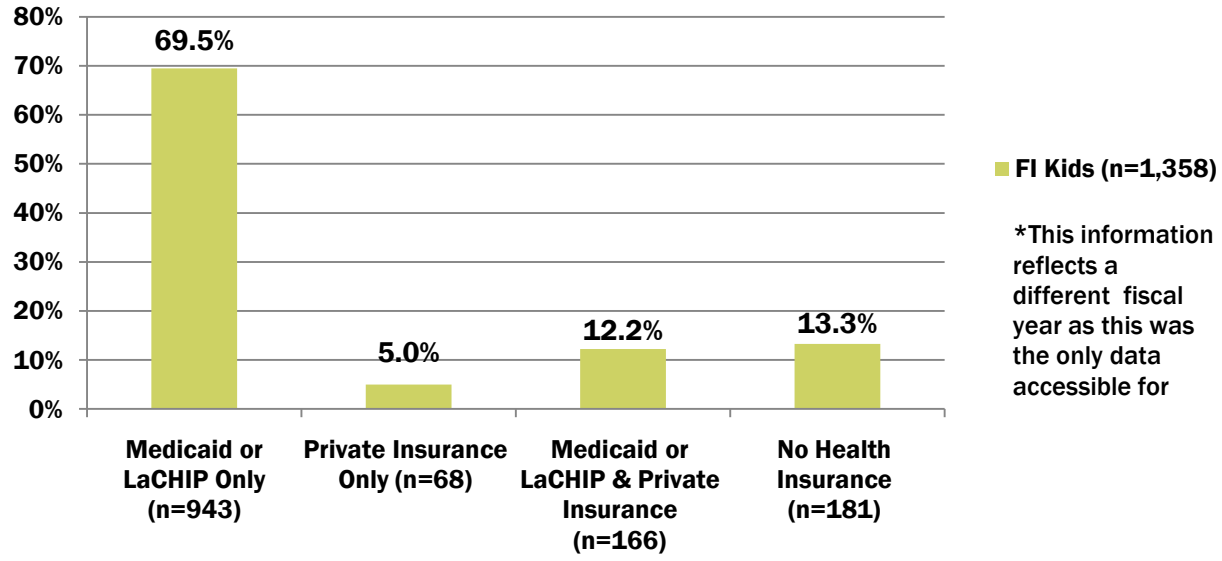
Based on another national study (Kenney, Lynch, Cook, and Phong, 2010), Louisiana's coverage of eligible Medicaid and LaCHIP low-income children was higher than the national average (88.8% compared to 81.8%) in 2008. Despite states such as Louisiana having higher than average participation rates, the same national study predicts that it is the poorest of children who make up a significant majority of children nationally who are eligible but uninsured (Kenney et al, 2010). The same may be speculated about some of the FI children who currently have no health insurance coverage. The next figure shows that most of the FI children are located in parishes with high rates of uninsured residents.

Figure 20: Residents without Health Insurance



Health insurance coverage for the 1,358 children in this study was obtained from Child Support Enforcement records, which only tracks current fiscal year health insurance coverage, yet most of the data used to assess the well-being of the FI children was from 2008-09. Despite the different years of data for comparison across all seven of the well-being domains, this demonstration study provides insights into how future well-being assessments and extended interagency data collaborations can be tracked using data from parallel physical years. With that in mind, consider the following summary of well-being in the current health domain based on health insurance coverage as seen in the figure below, and where a large percentage of children, 13.3% lack any type of health insurance coverage.

Figure 21. Health Insurance Coverage of 1,358 Fatherhood Initiative Children*



The above figure illustrates the type and distribution of health insurance coverage among the 1,358 FI children. Among them, 69.5% currently have Medicaid or LaCHIP health insurance coverage in 2010-11. An additional 5% have only private insurance from their non-custodial parents' employer. Another 12.2% have either Medicaid or private insurance from their non-custodial parents' employer, since the state allows the children's Medicaid coverage to continue due to the employment instability of their parents.

Current Medicaid and LaCHIP data are not available for comparison. However, it is noteworthy that in total, only 81.7% of children in the FI population have Medicaid or state health insurance coverage this year. This is significantly lower than the state's average public health insurance enrollment of 88.8% in 2008 and slightly lower than the national average of 81.8% also in 2008. Sadly, 13.3% (or 181) of the FI children had no current health insurance coverage. Based on these children's previous lunch status, most of them, more than 92.3% were eligible for free or reduced lunch. This suggests that they most likely were eligible for Medicaid or LaCHIP health insurance,

but may not have been enrolled, despite the fact that their custodial parent may have been struggling financially to meet the family's needs based on their school lunch status.

Again, due to the time limitations of this project, child support payments were not compiled for the current fiscal year of 2010. However, this research team questions whether or not a significantly higher number and percentage of these uninsured children may be low-income children whose non-custodial father is on file as not having an obligation according to our random based inquiry into these types of child support cases. The team's speculation is also based on Louisiana's current efforts to find out why eligible but uninsured children are not enrolled. Louisiana Department of Health and Hospital (DHH) telephone surveyors identified a puzzlingly high percentage of mothers whose children were Medicaid eligible but refused to enroll their children in this free health care program (Viator, 2010). More research may reveal that relationship complications between custodial parents and their children's non-custodial parent may be a contributing factor.

Another important observation would be to compare the school performance of children who do and do not receive health insurance coverage. This further study could not be undertaken due to a lack of historical Medicaid and LaCHIP data. Such research would be obtainable through the expansion of this data collaboration with the state's Department of Health and Hospitals (DHH). This is one of the partnership's goals during a Spring 2011 workshop inviting all state agency leaders to become partners to expand this ACF funded data collaboration project.

Well-Being Domain 4: Physical Environment and Safety

Children's health, development, and safety are largely influenced by the physical environments in which they live. The Forum for Child and Family Statistics collects data on the environmental conditions such as outdoor and indoor air quality, drinking water quality, and exposure to lead. The Forum also looks at children who are victims of serious violent crimes. While all of these indicators are important, these data sets are not available on individual children as is all of the other data examined in this report. However, the next two figures (Figures 22 and 23) show that many of the FI children live in parishes that have several facilities that handle toxic materials as well as areas with high crime rates.

Figure 22. FI Kids' Domicile near Environmentally Hazardous Areas

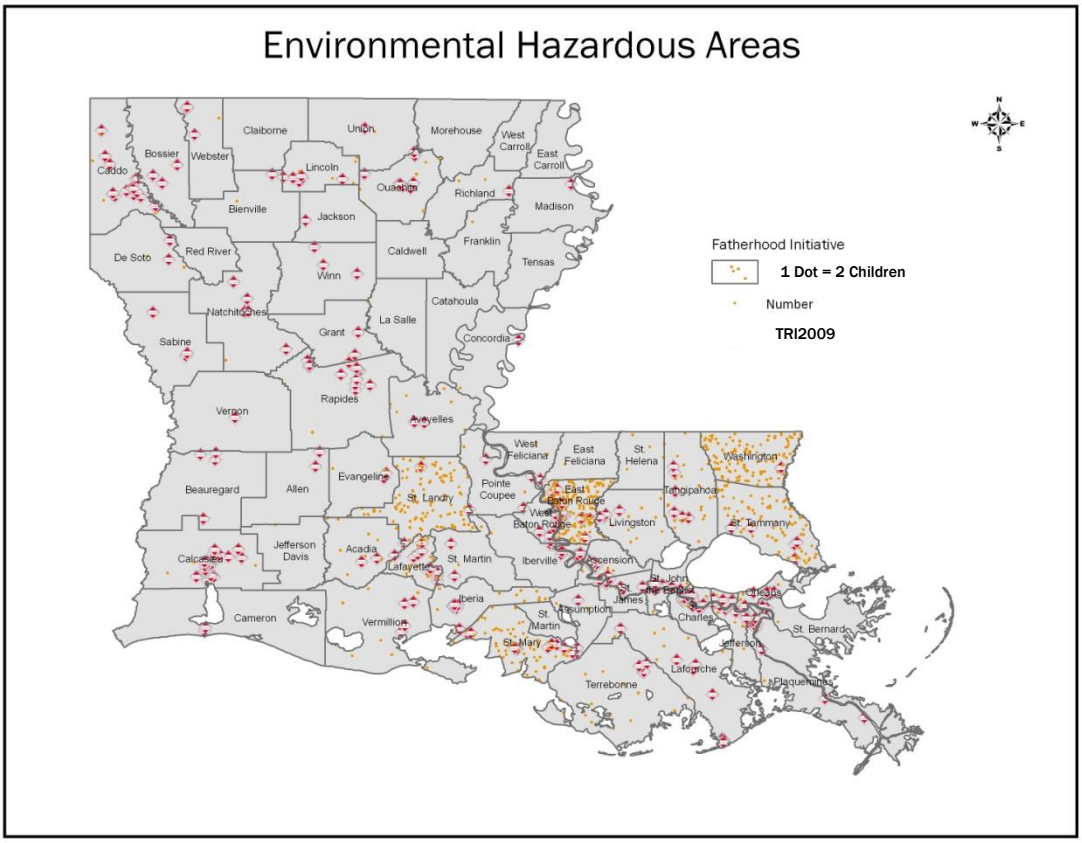
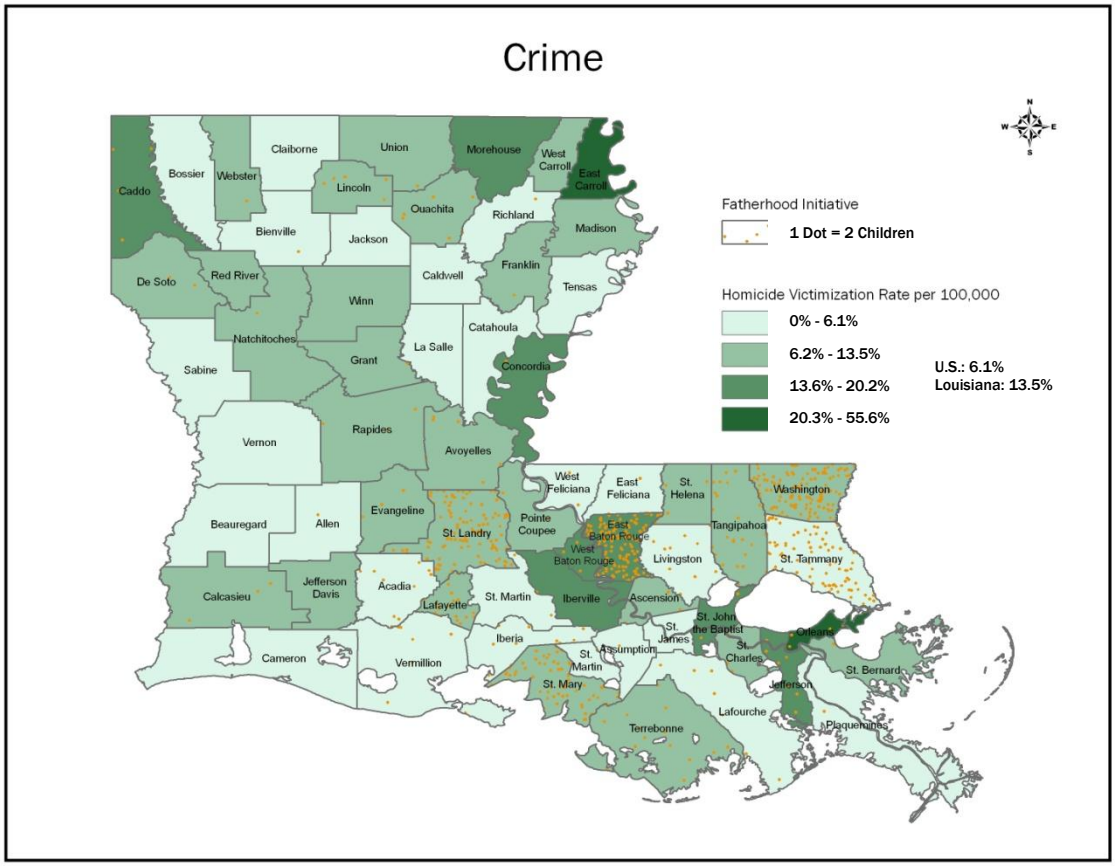


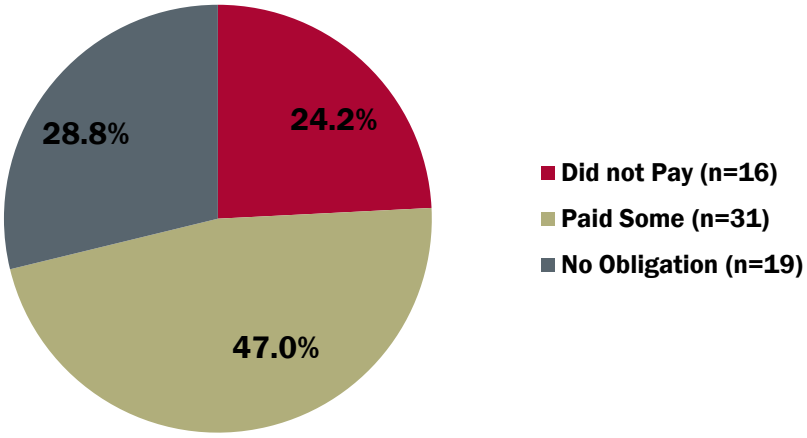
Figure 23. Crime Rates and FI Children's Domicile



After School Environment

Individual level data that are available for examination and within the context of this study is whether or not the Fatherhood Initiative children are enrolled in after school programs offered in their communities and funded through the Louisiana Department of Education. After school programs provide many academic and enrichment benefits. Yet one other benefit to low-income children is that it allows them to spend a few more hours in a physical environment that provides more structure and physical safety than what may be available in their home or neighborhoods. Children enrolled in after school programs are exposed to numerous role models who help nurture their love of learning and these programs promote healthy interaction with other children. Unfortunately, only 4.9% or 66 of the Fatherhood Initiative children were enrolled in after school programs. The next figure shows the non-custodial fathers' payment of those 66 children who were enrolled. The majority of the children enrolled were those who perhaps needed the support the most; children whose fathers did not pay and those with no obligation, which again are complicated cases. Of those enrolled in after school programs, 91% (60) were children who received free lunch and an additional 3% (2) who received reduced lunch.

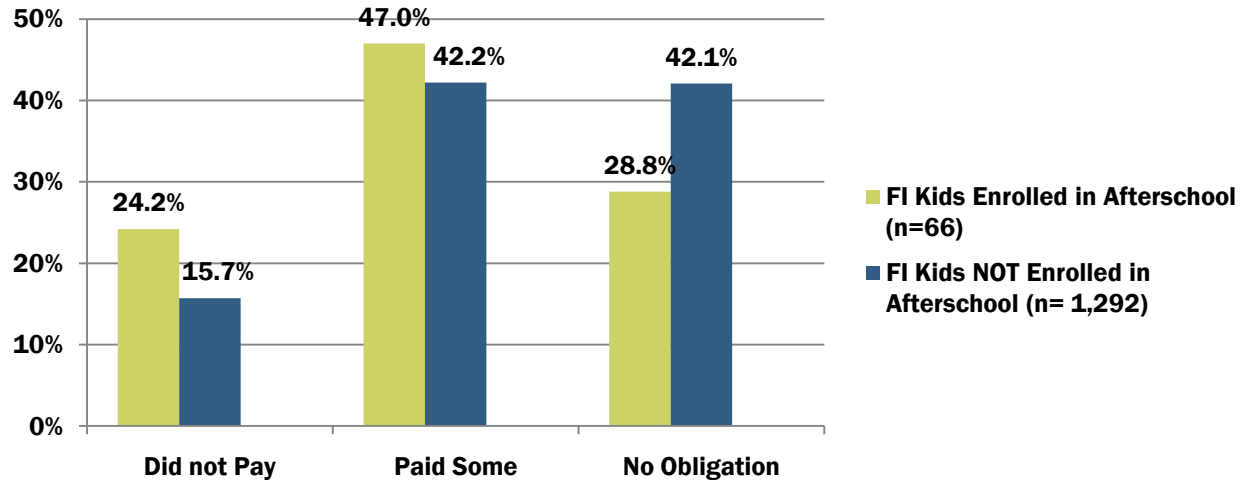
Figure 24. After School Enrollment of FI Children and NCP Payment



Additionally, a large percentage of the FI children enrolled in after school programs were identified for Special Education at the beginning of the year, 13 of the 66 or nearly 20%. About 12.1% or (8 of the 66) had at least one behavioral issue, and two had incarcerated fathers. These details suggest that more extensive analyses can be performed on these children if targeted services were being considered or tracked.

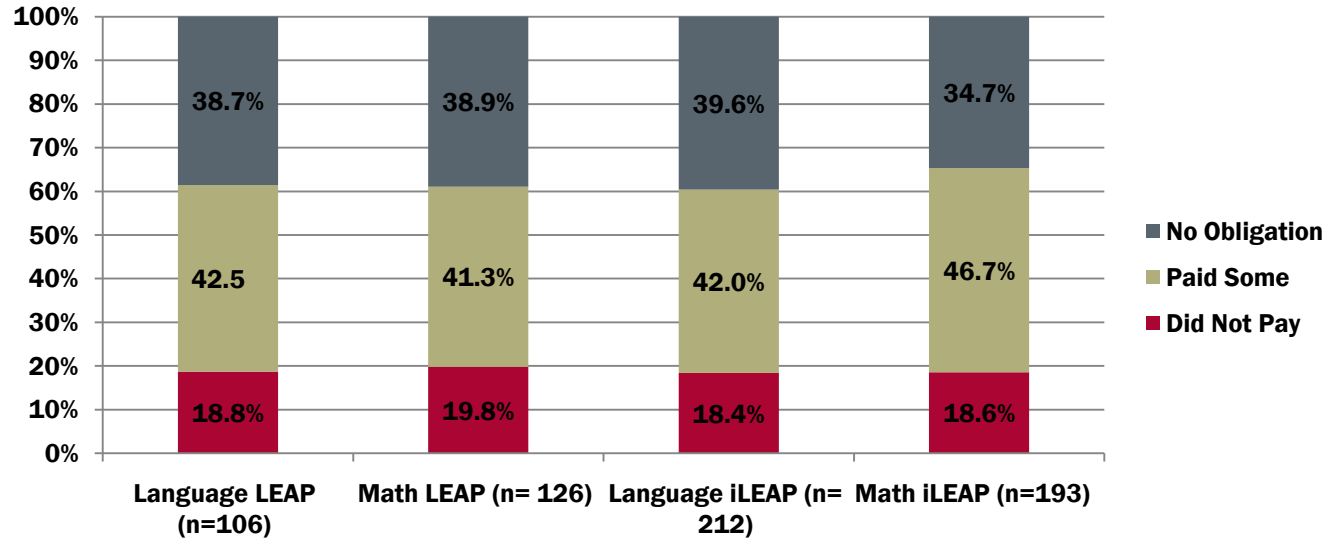
Because after school programs benefit low-income children in many ways, especially by providing a healthy physical environment beyond the regular school day, enrollment in after school programs play a critical role in contributing to the well-being of the Fatherhood Initiative children in multiple ways. It also helps to offset some of the many risk factors that compromise these children's well-being. However, more than 95% of these children were not enrolled in after school programs. Given that many of them are living in vulnerable family and social environments, as well as under poor economic circumstances as outlined previously, more needs to be learned about why these children were not enrolled in programs that could benefit them academically and socially, as well as provide a nurturing and safe physical environment while their parents work. The next figure shows a comparison among children enrolled and not enrolled in after school programs in the context of their fathers' child support payments. More than half are children whose fathers did not pay child support or were classified as having no obligation for child support, which previous data showed that under several scenarios most of these children were as vulnerable as those whose fathers did not pay.

Figure 25. NCP Pay and FI Children Enrolled and NOT Enrolled in After School Programs



Of the 1,292 Fatherhood Initiative children not enrolled in after school, at least 637 were tested and nearly half of them did not score basic or above on the state language test. Children scores reflect that at least 49.9% (318) in language and 50.0% (319) in math who took either of the state's language and/or math tests in grades 3rd through 10th could have benefited academically from after school enrollment because they did not score basic or above. The next figure shows the need and potential benefit of after school enrollment among Fatherhood Initiative children. The figure also shows the distribution of those who failed their annual test in language or math based on their fathers' child support obligation and payment. Only language and math scores are considered since they serve as primary indicators of basic skills. The first two bars are especially important because those are the children who are at risk of being retained in 4th, 8th, or 10th grades if they do not pass the state's tests.

Figure 26. LEAP & *i*LEAP Failure of Fatherhood Initiative NOT Enrolled in After School

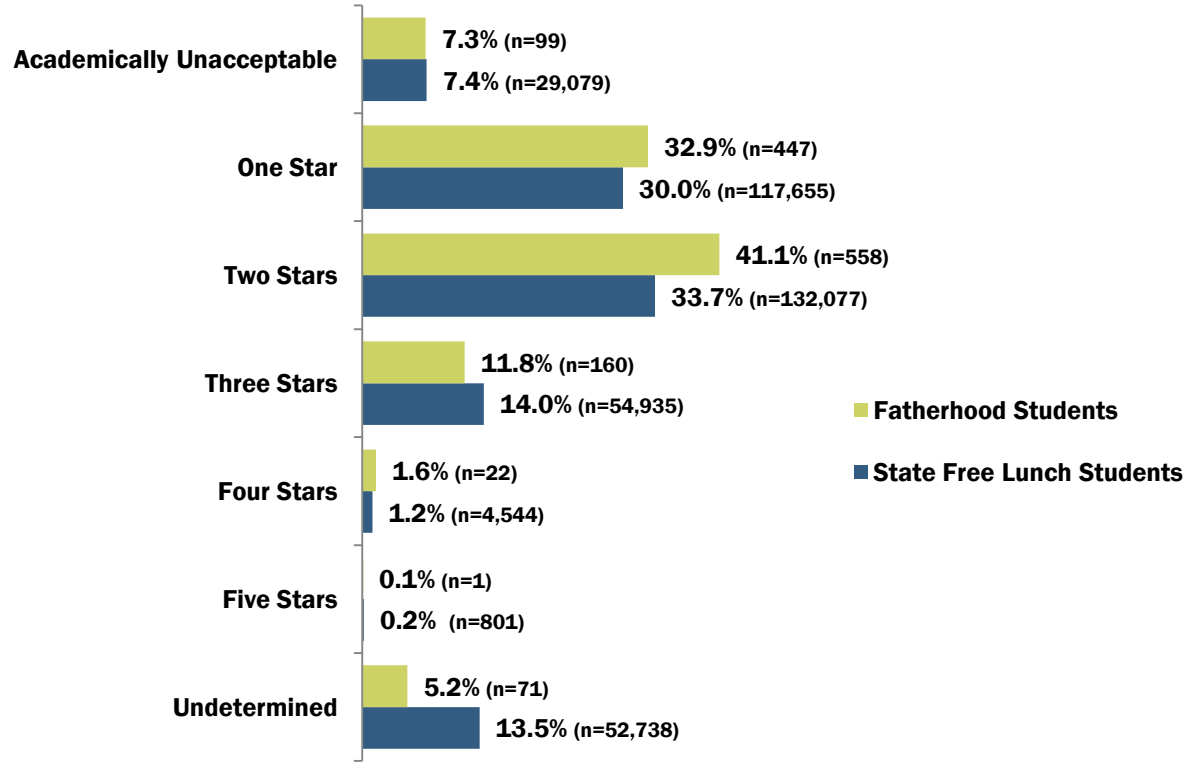


The well-being of children who face multiple risk factors is greatly tied to the conditions both present and not present in their physical environment at home, in their neighborhoods and in their schools. Much of that data is available through the U.S. Census or specific survey data compiled by various state agencies and community based organizations. However, these data sets are not included as part of this report as this research team is seeking to define what facilitates children's well-being as it relates to individual-level data, such as test scores, after school program enrollment and attendance rates. The state however could benefit from studies that explore the reasons why more low-income custodial parents are not enrolling their children in these after school programs, especially those that offer transportation supports.

School Environments

In addition to being placed in after school programs, children who are living in non-secured home and social environments benefit greatly from attending schools that have high expectations for all children and whose students are achieving positive academic outcomes. The next figure shows the distribution of Fatherhood Initiative students based on their schools' performance scores compared to the school performance scores of free lunch students statewide. FI children seem to have attended schools that were academically unacceptable at the same rate as other low-income students; however they were attending low and average performing schools at slightly higher rates than their free lunch counterparts

Figure 27. School Performance Scores of FI Children and LA Free Lunch Children



Overall the Fatherhood Initiative children seemed to be faring at about the same rate as their free lunch counterparts. It also appears that aside from the 40% who attended failing and low performing one star schools, the rest are attending schools that are higher than one star, but are often on the verge of becoming academically unacceptable. Nearly 55% of them are in schools where achievement was higher. It should be noted however, that the true measure of a school's ability to nurture low-income children who face multiple layers of challenges, is the school's ability to ensure that these children are academically successful. In domain six of this report, the children's academic and other education performance indicators will be examined.

As we analyzed the data across the 16 databases, many data sets were chosen for more in-depth consideration and review. However, no information is reported on data found in the Louisiana Educational Accountability Data System (LEADS) that ties individual children to teachers and classifies those teachers as being highly qualified for the core or non core courses in which they teach. For the purpose of this study, none of that data are reported on because it was not feasible within both the time limitations and the scope of the project. With regard to future analyzes, data from the LEADS database would be beneficial in exploring the relationship between teacher qualifications and students' performance in the context of multiple risk factors among individual children.

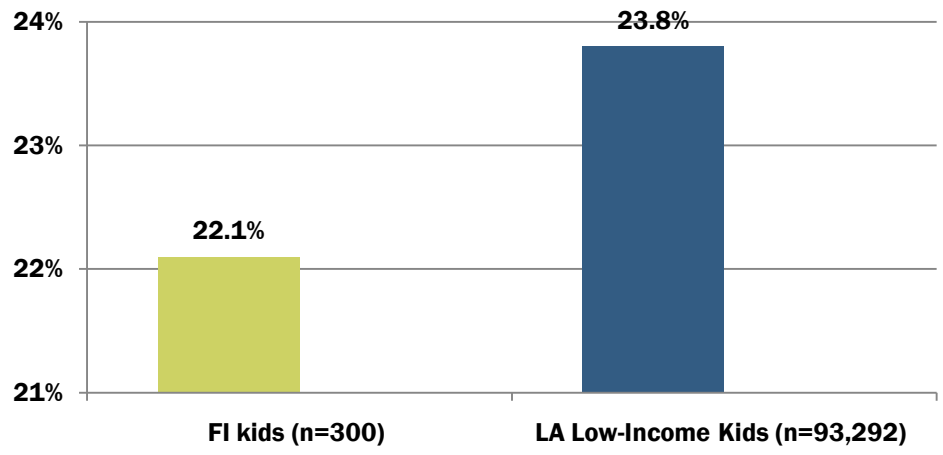
Well-Being Domain 5: Behavior

The ability of young children who learn to control their actions when performing independent or shared tasks with others in an orderly and acceptable manner based on mainstream society's standards is a critical part in determining children's behavioral outcomes as they get older. If children have not learned to control their behavior in school and in society, it puts their well-being at risk. Minor infractions could advance to major infractions in school that may require more serious attention and often stems from or leads to more problems at home and at school. Three behavior-related well-being factors of FI children are considered in this section of the report: 1) serious behavioral problems at school that result in suspension or expulsion (Figures 28 and 29), 2) truancy (Figures 30 and 31), and 3) participation in the state's Office of Juvenile Justice (OJJ) system. All are considered in the context of their fathers' child support obligation and payment.

Serious Behavioral Problems

The first figure shows that both the Fatherhood Initiative children and the state's free lunch children had very similar behavioral problems that resulted in a suspension or expulsion at about the same percentages. The Fatherhood Initiative children had disciplinary actions at 22.1% while the state's free lunch children's rate was 23.8%. All of these behavioral issues are of concern because they were addressed with either in or out of school suspensions or expulsions, which will certainly impact learning, achievement, and the overall well-being of a child. These behavioral problems are often tied to academic disengagement which may affect a child in many ways throughout his/her lifetime, especially if it leads to dropping out of school.

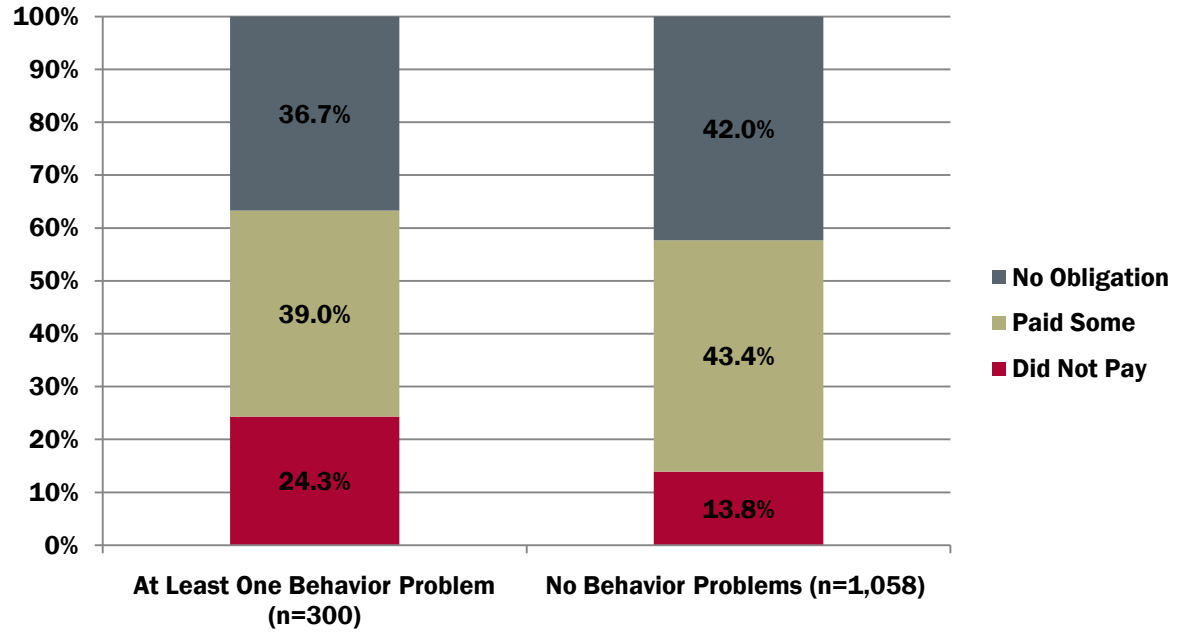
Figure 28. FI Children who had at least one Serious Disciplinary Occurrence



In the next figure, discipline is shown in the context of the father's child support obligation and payment for the FI children with at least one serious behavior incident and those without any incidences. Note that the children without any serious behavioral incidences had larger percentages of fathers who paid child support. However, if we were to look at the two most

vulnerable categories, based on what has been learned through this study, those children whose fathers did not pay, and those children whose fathers had no obligation, it becomes clearly evident that 61% of the children who had behavioral incidents fell into these two vulnerable categories.

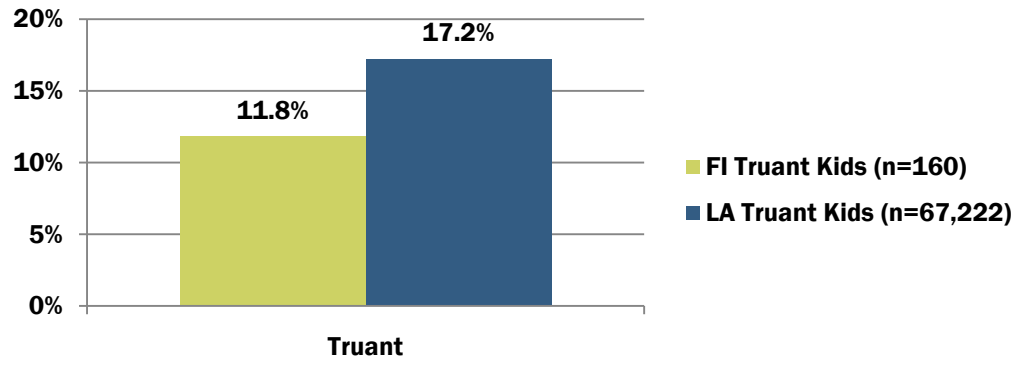
Figure 29. NCP Pay Comparison for FI Children with and without at least One Serious Behavior Incident



Truancy Problems

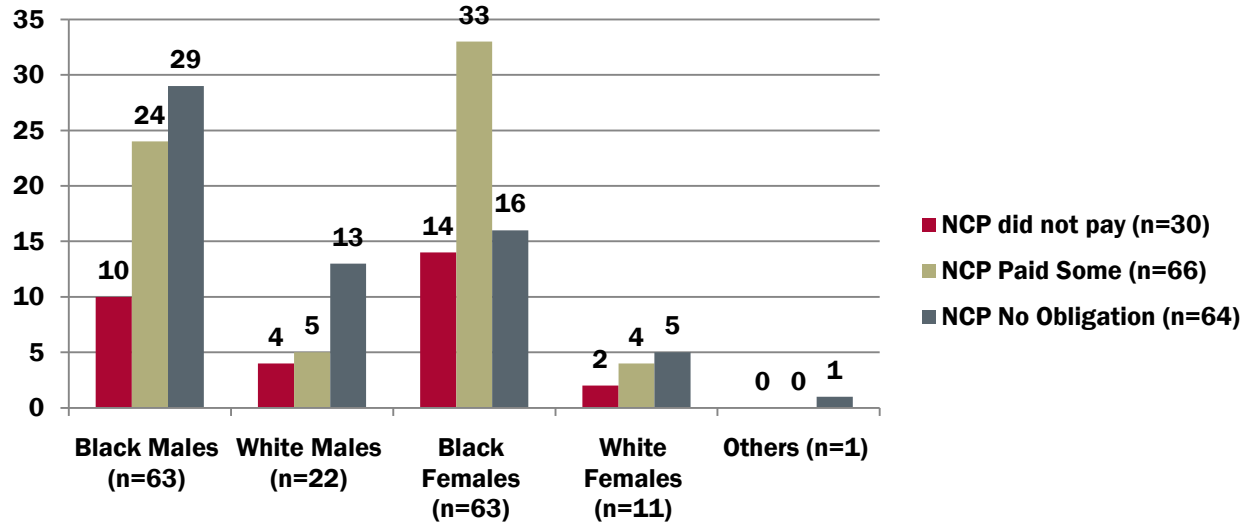
Truancy is yet another risk factor that is tied to a child's behavior as well as to their family and social environment since parental assistance is needed to demand school attendance. It appears that the Fatherhood Initiative children were truant at the rate of 11.8% compared to 17.2% for other Louisiana truant children. Although the data are not presented in this chart, 6.25% (10 of 160) of FI truant children were preschoolers and another 8.75% or (14 of 160) were in kindergarten, which indicates that 15% of the truant children in this subset of children were younger than the first grade age of 6.

Figure 30. Truant Students



The next figure shows the truant children based on three other factors: race, gender and their father's child support payments. While males, especially black males, are usually at the most risk on several indicators, it was black females whose fathers paid something toward their child support obligation that were the most truant. Black males whose father's had no obligation and who paid some followed closely behind black females.

Figure 31. 160 Truant FI Children by Race, Gender & NCP Pay



Five of the 300 Fatherhood Initiative children who had behavioral incidences also dropped out of school that year (See later in Figure 29: Behavior and NCP Payment). Seven of the truant children in the state also dropped out of school that year. A large percentage of those children with behavioral incidences, 42.5% or (68 of 160), were also truant. These subgroups of students who have multiple disciplinary incidences, as well as those who exhibit behavioral problems in conjunction with other risk factors such as drop out and/or truancy are prime targets for stronger interventions that might help to secure their well-being. These are the students who are on their way towards more costly and severe interventions such as being placed in the Juvenile Justice system.

Encounters with the Office of Juvenile Justice (OJJ)

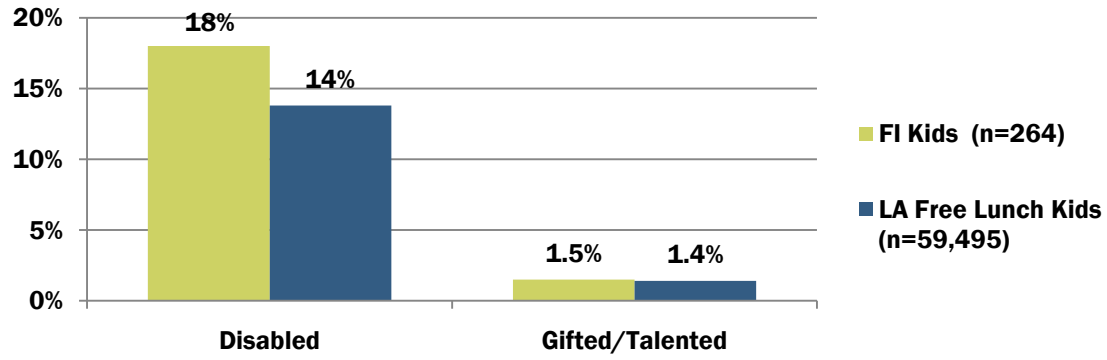
Minors who continue to have behavior problems eventually end up in the OJJ system and once there many continue to go in and out of the system. OJJ involvement is an indicator that a child's well-being is severely off track. Of the 1,358 Fatherhood Initiative children examined in this report, 15 or 1.1% of them had behavioral violations that were serious enough to be taken from their home and school and placed in the custody of the state. Ten had previous behavioral issues in school that year and one was truant. They ranged in age from 13 to 17. Most were males (11 of the 15) or were from the high risk minority group of African Americans (12 of 15). Eight were African American males and four were African American females. None of them dropped out of school that year, and nearly half, 7 of the 15 or 46.7%, had fathers who had no obligation. One scored mastery on the 10th grade LEAP, while most of the others failed their state tests—6 of 11 or (54.5%) failed in language and 8 of 11 or (72.7%) failed in math, which suggests that most were not performing well in school. Their failing school performance combined with their unresolved behavioral issues present even more layers of complication with regard to securing their well-being.

Well-Being Domain 6: Education

The viability of our state largely rests on the educational success of all children whose educational training should equip them to acquire meaningful employment and assist them in maintaining a decent quality of life. Educated citizens are also less likely to commit crimes or depend on government assistance in order to live. The quality of their education also shapes their personal development and their economic and social advancement. The data examined in this section will provide a sense of how well the Fatherhood Initiative children are progressing educationally from early childhood through high school graduation.

The first set of data involves the percentage of children who at the beginning of the school year are designated to receive special education services. Except for the children that are designated as gifted and talented, all other special education students face a myriad of challenges academically even with the prescribed interventions. This figure shows that Fatherhood Initiative children are earmarked for special education services at 18%, while state free lunch kids, although representing a higher number of children, are at 14%.

Figure 32. Special Education Classification



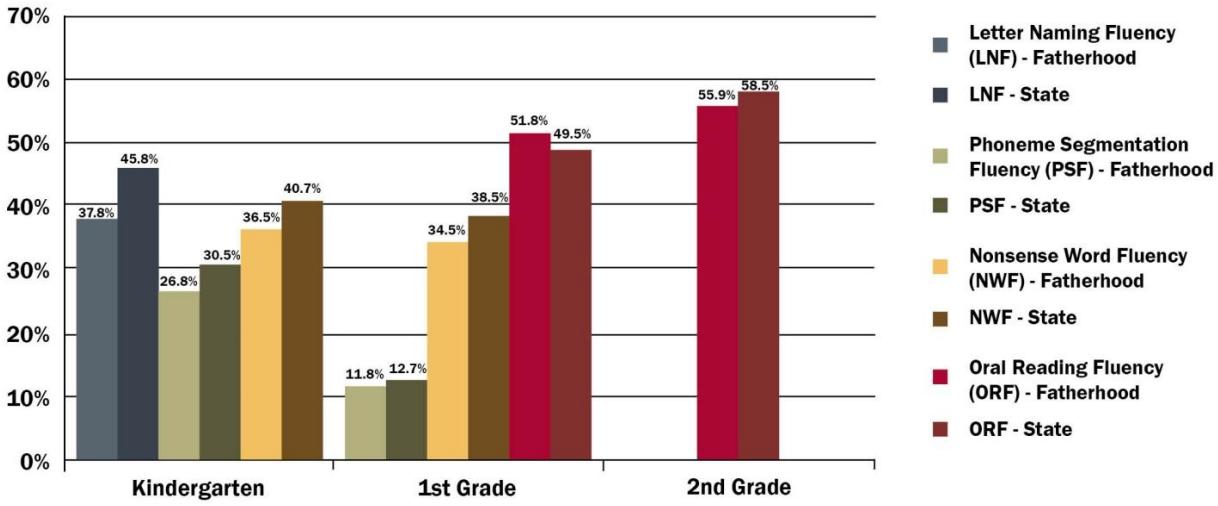
In total, there were 265 or 19.5% of Fatherhood Initiative students designated as needing special education (SPED) services at the beginning of the school year due to being classified as disabled or gifted/talented. Throughout that same year, 4 of those same students dropped out of school and 32 were truant. Another 20% of all Fatherhood Initiative students were cited for missing too many days of school or for being excessively late. Still yet, another 20% or (13 of 66) that enrolled in after school were also SPED students. Two of the SPED students were also in the OJJ system and (17 of 59) or 28.8% of the SPED students were also in the foster care system. Another 21.6% or (57 of 265) who were earmarked as SPED with serious behavioral problems in school also ended up being suspended or expelled. A significant percentage of these SPED kids, 45.7% were those whose fathers had no child support obligations. Again, these data suggest that SPED is only one of many layers of risk factors faced by nearly one in every 4 SPED Fatherhood Initiative children in certain subgroups such as those that were truant, in foster care, or who had behavioral problems. More than half of the SPED FI children failed both language and math on LEAP and *i*LEAP tests.

Early Childhood Learning

The next set of data surrounds the enrollment of Fatherhood Initiative children in high quality preschool programs. Of the 2,445 FI children studied, 335 or 13.7% were eligible for preschool at ages three or four in 2008-09. Only 24% or (82 of 335) of those who were preschool age were found in SIS. This leaves another 253 children's early learning experiences from the multi-risk Fatherhood Initiative subpopulation needing to be studied, especially when one considers how those high quality early learning experiences can impact their school readiness and their future learning once they enter public school classrooms. Enrollment in a high quality preschool or day care center is critical for the immediate and long term academic and social success for low-income children. Access to high quality early learning experiences can also help to minimize the achievement gap between low-income children and those from more affluent families. The Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills assessment referred to as DIBELS is a set of procedures that assess early literacy skills in five basic areas from kindergarten through 6th grade. Later in this section we examine the language skills of students in grades 3 through 6 based on their performance on the state LEAP and *i*LEAP tests.

In the next figure we display the percentage of Fatherhood Initiative children in grades kindergarten through 2nd grade compared to their state low-income counterparts who are either struggling or at risk of having difficulties in reading. Overall both groups of children are struggling at about the same rate even though in all but one test—the 1st grade oral reading fluency tests, the Fatherhood Initiative children are struggling at a slightly lower rate.

Figure 33. FI and Low-Income LA Children DIBELS Scores for those who are NOT Demonstrating Pre-Reading Skills at Grade Level

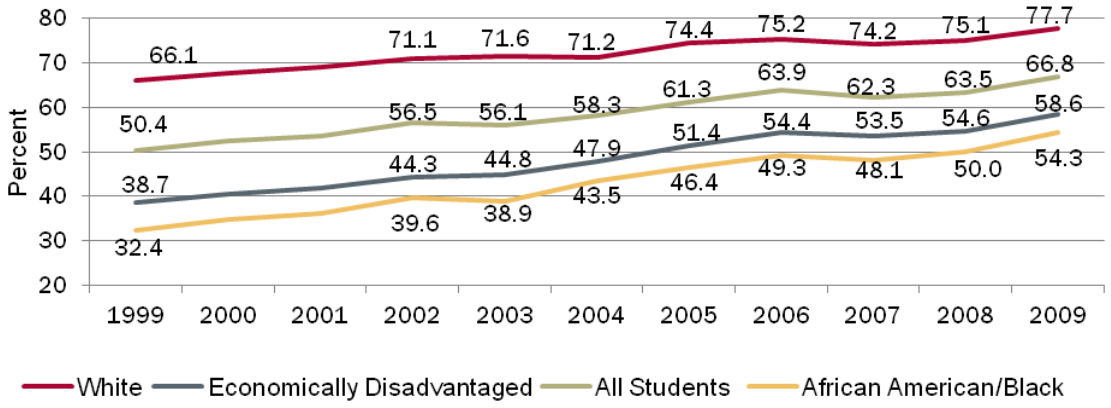


Elementary and Secondary Performance

The next series of figures pertain to the language and math performance of Fatherhood Initiative children on state tests in grades 3-10, with grades 4, 8, and 10 resulting in retention for those who

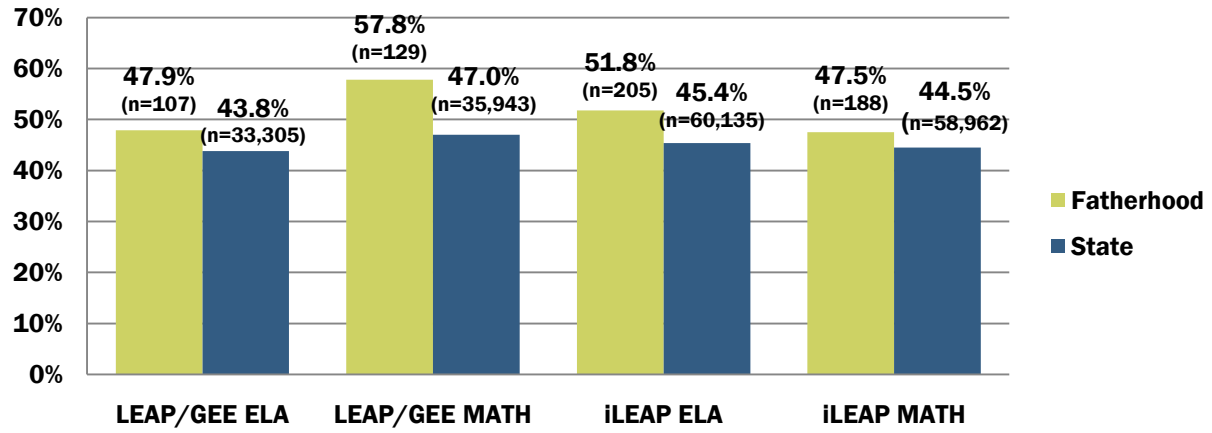
do not pass these high stakes tests in those grades. See Appendix 6 for a review of state testing acronyms. Louisiana implemented this testing system in 1999, and although all school districts strive to improve the performance of all children, low-income children, which the FI children are a subpopulation of, lag behind all others except African American students; who are last as seen in the figure below. It should be noted that more than 3 of every 4 FI child is African American.

Figure 34. Percentage of Louisiana Students Who Scored Basic or Above on the LEAP Language Test over 10 Years



In this next illustration, Fatherhood Initiative students are shown to be consistently performing below basic and/or failing their language and math achievement tests across all grades, when compared to low-income students statewide.

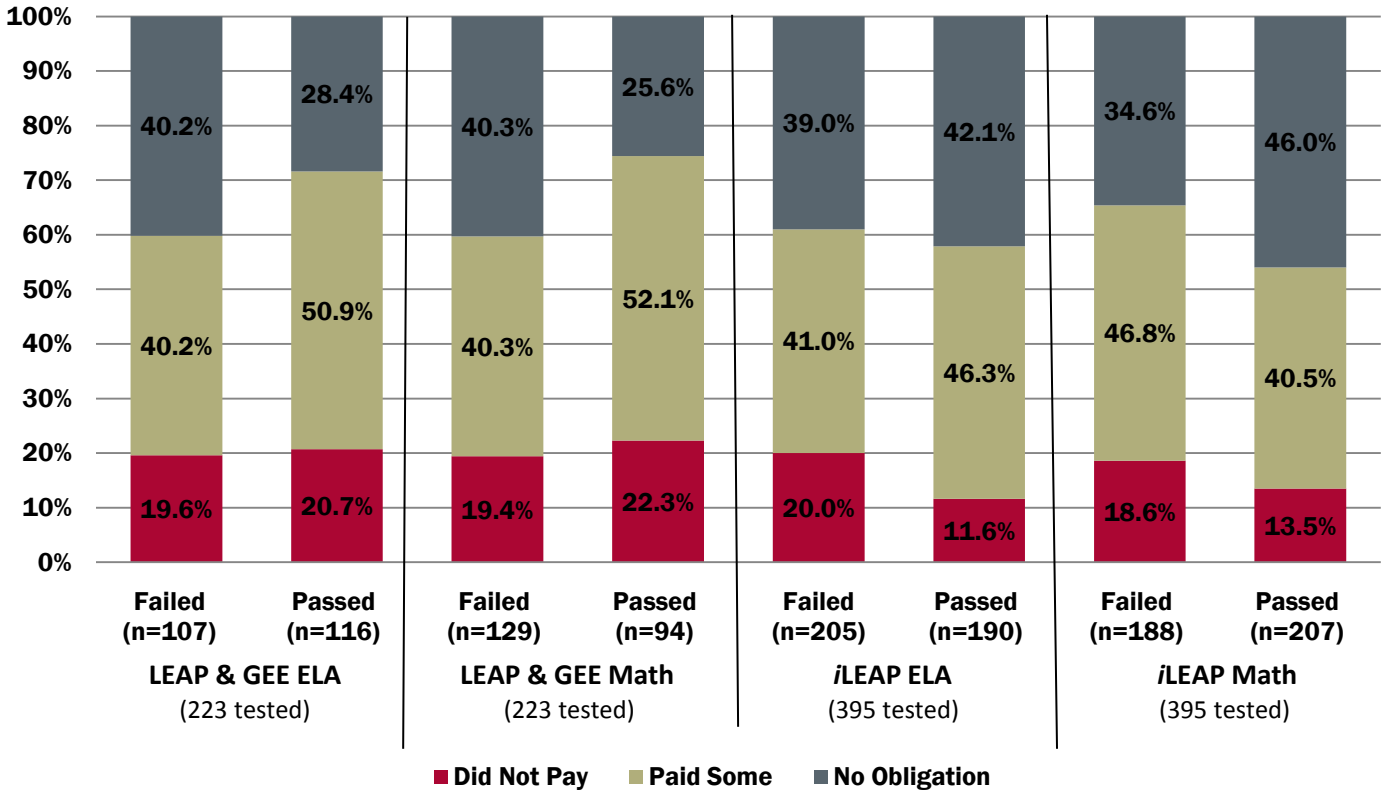
Figure 35. Fatherhood Initiative & Free Lunch Students who performed Below Basic on State Tests



The next figure shows the distribution of payment for Fatherhood Initiative students who were performing below basic and/or failing their language and math tests as shown in the previous figure. As seen in the this figure, interestingly on the high stakes tests in grades 4, 8, and 10, the FI children whose fathers did not have any obligations underachieved at much higher percentages than the children whose fathers didn't pay or who paid something towards their child support. In reviewing the test scores in grades 3, 5, 6, 7, and 9, students whose fathers who had made no

payments, failed language and math at significantly higher rates than FI children whose fathers had made payments or had no obligation.

Figure 36. NCP Pay of FI Free Lunch Children who Failed State Tests Compared to their FI Counterparts who Passed

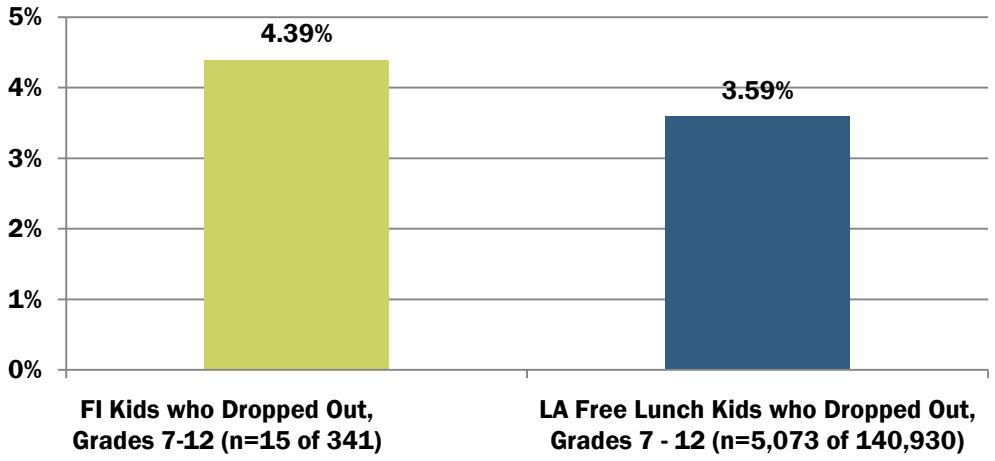


The preceding figure also shows that for the most part, FI children who passed their state tests had larger percentages of fathers who paid child support rather than who did not pay or had no obligation. The main exception was *i*LEAP math students who passed their tests. They had a smaller percentage of non-custodial parents who paid child support. The group of FI children who passed their state tests despite not benefiting from child support payments is an interesting group to target for further research.

Drop Out

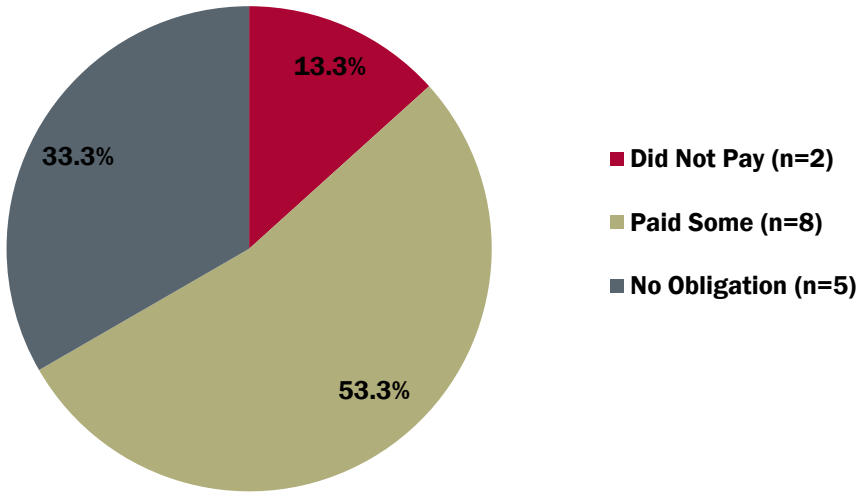
Dropping out of school is often perceived as a one-time event rather than a process that starts long before the actual act of dropping out of school occurs. While numerous causes have been cited, state achievement testing performance as previously presented serves as a significant indicator of impending dropout occurrences. The next figure shows that the FI children in grades 7-12 dropped out at a much larger percentage than free lunch children statewide. As noted earlier, the FI group is significantly smaller than the free lunch group statewide and is not intended as a scientifically appropriate comparison group. Rather the Louisiana free lunch students serve as a general reference for considering the outcomes of the FI children.

Figure 37. FI Children who Dropped out of School Compared to LA Free Lunch Students.



Of the 15 FI children who dropped out of school in the year being examined, the next figure shows that surprisingly significantly more of those whose fathers paid something towards their child support dropped out (or 53.3%) while those children in the two more vulnerable risk categories dropped out at a slightly lower rate of 47%, clearly showing that all of these children are vulnerable.

Figure 38. NCP Pay of FI Children who Dropped out in Grades 7 – 12



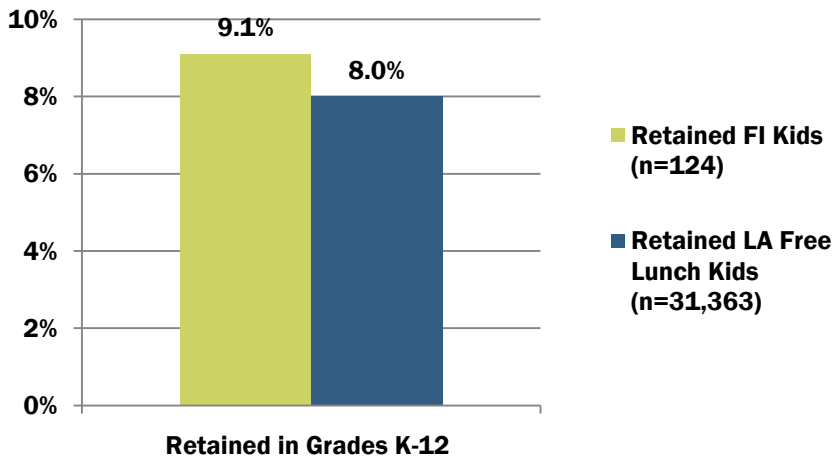
Other issues plagued this seemingly small yet important group of 15 FI children who dropped out of school that year. Nearly half or 7 of them were truant; 5 had serious behavioral problems with three of the five having multiple disciplinary occurrences that resulted in expulsion or suspension from school. Of these 15 dropouts, only one took the state tests, which were the *i*LEAP tests in

language and math, and that student failed both. Two of the dropouts were in foster care, but none were involved with the Office of Juvenile Justice.

Grade Retention

The final indicator for education well-being to be considered was grade retention. This indicator served as a strong precursor to assured dropout based on a 100 year meta study done by Heckman and LaFontaine (2007). According to the authors of the study, if a child is retained one time, his/her chances of dropping out is at 75%, if he/she is retained twice that percentage increases to 100%; thereby demonstrating that grade retention instead of specific intervention fails every time (Jimerson, 2001). The following figure shows that Fatherhood Initiative children were retained at 9.1%, while their free lunch counterparts, a significantly larger group, failed at a rate of 8%. All of the aforementioned education related indicators collectively suggest that the Fatherhood Initiative group of children continue to live and be educated in situations and environments where their well-being is compromised in many domains.

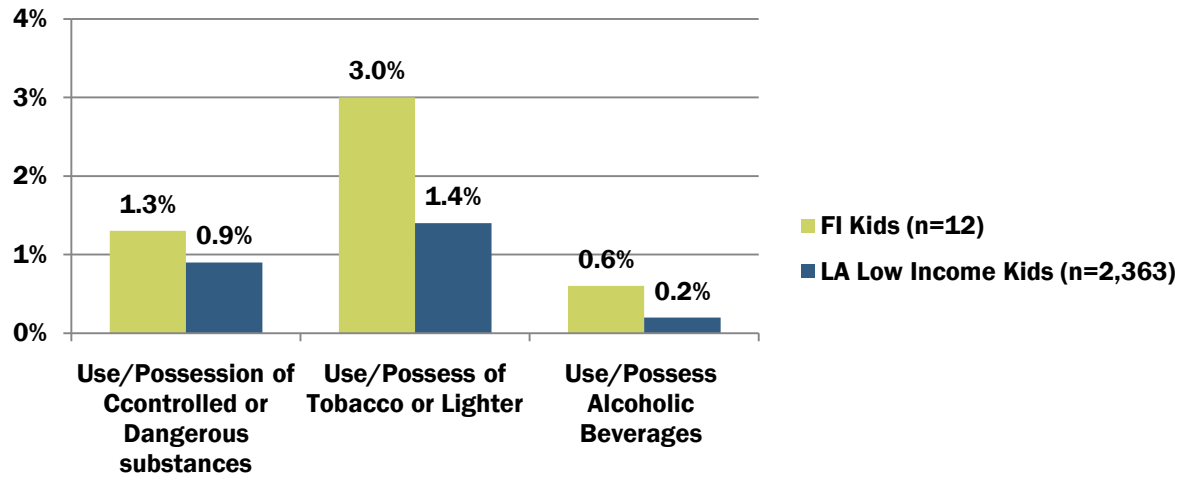
Figure 39. Grade Retention of Fatherhood Initiative Children



Well-Being Domain 7: Health

Health is defined by the World Health Organization, (2010) as a "state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity" (para.1). While there is a limited amount of individual-level data that can help to define the health of the Fatherhood Initiative children for this demonstration project, two indicators that are available are considered for discussion. The first of the two data sets reviewed is presented in the next figure which shows students who are disciplined in school for violations associated with the use of alcohol, cigarettes, or controlled substances. Sadly, a disproportionately larger percentage of the Fatherhood Initiative students are disciplined for these types of violations when compared the same violations among low-income students statewide.

Figure 40. Discipline for Possession of Alcohol, Tobacco, or Controlled Substances



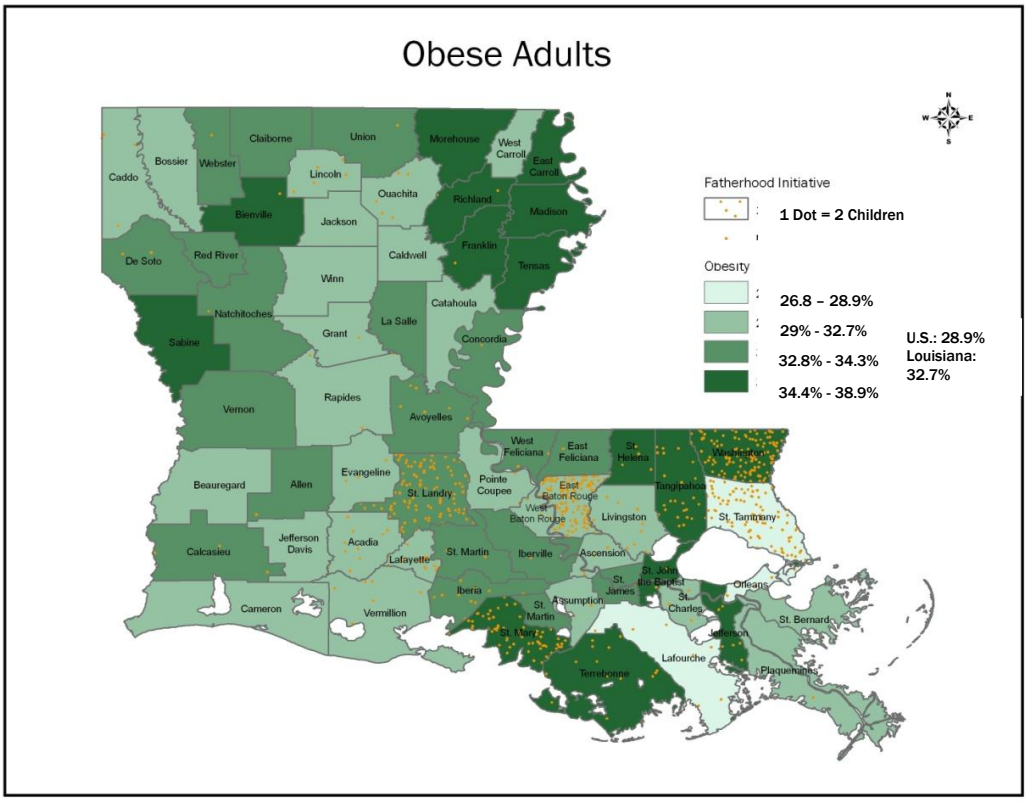
Life stresses that are exacerbated by attempting to thrive in economically depressed family and social environments are often tied to problems of alcohol, tobacco, or controlled substance abuse in low-income communities. These problems lead to costly individual and community outcomes if children have poor access to appropriate treatment, and lack adequate community and family supports to improve their well-being. According to the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA, 2010), substance abuse, addictions, poor emotional health, and mental illnesses create more of a fiscal burden on individuals, families, businesses, and state and local governments than any other form of disability. Mental health and substance abuse disorders are complex problems that may affect every aspect of a person's life. The type of behavioral incidences examined here are in a sense an indicator of children who at some point in their lives may become a burden to society either through the criminal justice system, or the social services systems if they do not receive more intensive interventions in the context of other risk factors that threaten their well-being.

Well-Being Based on Physical Health

A child's physical health is essentially a predictor of his/her later health as an adult. Low- income children face many more social and environmental experiences that make it difficult for them to learn and access healthy nutrition and fitness strategies and resources. Poor physical and mental health among children severely impacts their academic performance.

This summer the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJ) and the Trust for America's Health (TFAH, 2010) named Louisiana the fifth most obese state in the nation in its "F as in Fat: How Obesity Threatens America's Future 2010" report. The report highlights the racial and ethnic disparities in both adult and child obesity rates. Low-income African Americans and Latinos are more likely to be obese than whites and those who earned higher incomes. This same report also claims Louisiana as the fourth highest state with obese children. TFAH's Executive Director said, "This report shows that the country has taken bold steps to address the obesity crisis in recent years, but the nation's response has yet to fully match the magnitude of the problem. Millions of Americans still face barriers—like the high cost of healthy foods and lack of access to safe places to be physically active—that make healthy choices challenging" (TFAH, 2010, para.4). The next figure shows that most of the FI children live in parishes with adult obesity rates that exceed both the state and US average.

Figure 41. Obesity Rates and FI Children Domicile



For the purpose of defining the health well-being of FI children for this ACF report, there was no individual health related data on public school children other than the Fitness Gram data compiled by the Picard Center for Child Development and Lifelong Learning. Most of the other data in this report focuses on the 2008-09 fiscal year, yet data for Spring 2010 is being considered in order to glean some sense of how to monitor the physical health of individual children in Louisiana. During that school year, only 14 school districts voluntarily participated in the Fitness Gram Study. Of the 1,358 FI children that were identified in this ACF study, only 15 of them participated throughout those seven districts.

Body Mass Index (BMI) was determined for each student in the study. Of the 15 FI children, 9 of them or 60% were considered over weight (3 of 9) were obese (6 of 9). Four of the seven black females, and four of the seven black males were obese, and the only white male in the study was either obese or overweight. While these numbers only represent a very small sample of children, and it is not established if they statistically represent the entire pool of Fatherhood Initiative children. If they would be a representative sample, their BMI data would be double that of children nationwide (TFAH, 2010). The BMI data indicates health challenges for these children as they enter into adulthood. As more public school districts begin to participate in the state's fitness gram research, that data will make it easier for stakeholders to monitor children's health status and progress as interventions are implemented.

It is not our intent to suggest that conclusions be drawn from such a small sample of FI children because we cannot ensure that they are representative of the entire population of:

a) children whose fathers received some type of TANF funded fatherhood support services, and
b) all children whose non-custodial father has child support orders on file with Child Support Enforcement.

If in fact these children are representative of the low-income children growing up in homes without their fathers present, this set of fitness data is alarming and suggests that these children have impending health issues that add yet more layers of risk to the complex list of risk factors that they face daily.

Multiple Risk Factors of 1,358 Fatherhood Initiative Children

One of the primary objectives of this demonstration research report is to show state agencies the capacity that is available to collect and analyze individual-level well-being and outcome data on children who receive state funded services. By focusing on the data for a subset of children who were being served, or who were at risk of being served by TANF and Child Support Enforcement, it provided an opportunity to design a guide for data collaboration between two state agencies that would allow for the examination and compilation of data that had never been examined so extensively. While there are numerous ways to collect, analyze, and report data on the children served by both agencies, this report provides a way to look at some key factors that threaten the well-being of children across seven domains based on critical factors that shape children's development. Certainly, any one of the risk factors put these children at risk in many ways, but those who have multiple risks across these domains represent a subpopulation of children who are severely at risk of unhealthy growth and development.

There are several landmark and longitudinal studies (see Greenberg et al, 1999) which show that risk factors alone such as being raised in single parent households do not predict poor outcomes for children. Rather the more layers of risk children encounter the more likely they are to have poor outcomes. The next table shows the distribution of children in the FI group who experienced risk factors across multiple well-being domains. A disproportionately large percentage of them have multiple risk factors that threaten their well-being in two or more domains.

Figure 42. Summary of Children with Negative Indictors Across Multiple Well-being Domains

Number of Domains	Number of Children	Percent of Children
0	16	1.2%
1	176	13%
2	374	27.5%
3	397	29.2%
4	257	18.9%
5	115	8.5%
6	22	1.6%
7	1	0.1%
Total	1,358	100%

Note that in the table above, 16 FI children had no risks in any of the seven well-being domains. While all 1,358 FI children in this report are considered at-risk because they have one parent living in a different household, the FI children with no other risks in any of the seven domains had fathers that *paid something* towards their child support responsibilities. On the contrary, their peers had a non-custodial parent who *did not pay* or who had *no obligation* for child support, which classified

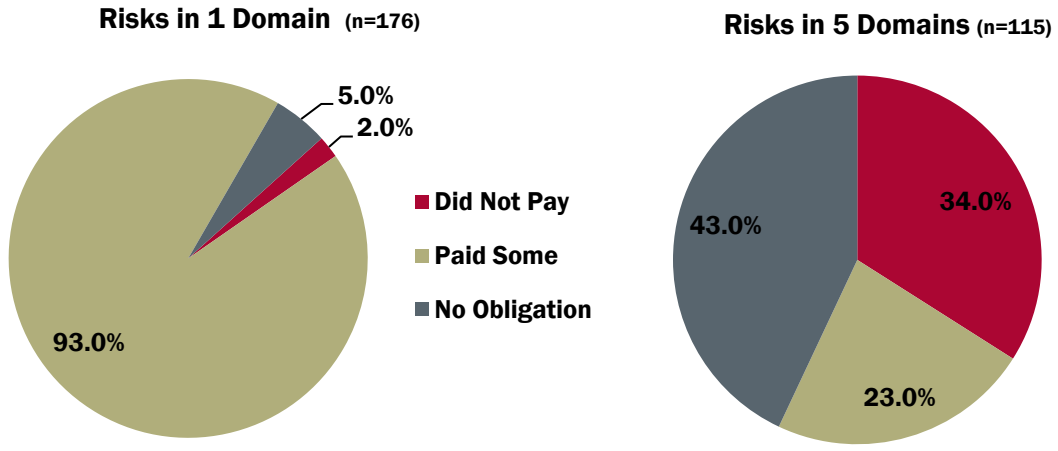
them as having at least one risk factor in the first well-being domain that considers the child's family structure.

As seen in Figure 42, the largest majority of Fatherhood Initiative children, 56.7%, (27.5% plus 29.2%), had multiple risk factors that ranked them among children with risk factors in only two or three of the well-being domains. Almost a third (or 29.1%) of the children studied had negative indicators in four or more of the seven well-being domains, which constitutes more than half of the seven domains examined with the largest group (18.9%) experiencing risk factors in four well-being domains. Consistently, disproportionately large percentages of children with risks in four or more domains have fathers who had *no obligation* to pay child support despite the fact that these children needed multiple family supports.

Using a statistical analysis, the next section of this report will demonstrate that the FI children whose NCP *did not pay* or had *no obligation* for child support are more likely to have multiple layers of risks. This suggests that those children fall into the most vulnerable groups of children studied in this project. For discussion purposes, how agencies choose to collect and analyze these data sets may vary, yet children who fall into more than half of the domains with negative indicators should be the children who receive the most intensive and extensive interventions. If Louisiana aspires to reduce the number of children who rely on government assistance as they become adults, these children should be the prime targets for interventions.

Interestingly, the 16 FI children who had no risk factors in the seven well-being domains had non-custodial parents who paid child support, while nearly three-fourths of those who had risks in six of the seven domains had non-custodial parents who *did not pay* or who had *no obligation* towards child support. There was only one child with risks in all seven domains, and that child's non-custodial parent had *no obligation* for child support. Consistently the higher number of risks FI children had the more there was a higher percentage of non-custodial parents who *did not pay* or who had *no obligation* as seen in a comparison between FI children with risks in only one domain as compared to FI children with risks in five domains.

Figure 43. NCP Child Support Payment Comparison between FI Children with risks in at least One Well-Being Domain and Risks in Five Well-Being Domains.



Notice that almost all of the FI children with risks in only one well-being domain had non-custodial parents who *paid* child support (red section), yet the FI children who experienced multiple risks in more of the well-being domains had few percentages of NCP who paid child support. This pattern continued as children experienced risks in more domains. (See Appendix 4 for a detailed comparison).

Analysis of the Effect of Child Support Payment on the Child's Number of Domain Risks

The outcome examined in this analysis is the number of domain risks experienced by the child based on seven well-being domains containing up to 17 risk indicators. The number of domain risks ranges from 0 to 7 for at least one risk factor that is experienced by each child per well-being domain (See Appendix 5 for a list of the risk indicators). Our analysis is based on a comparison of three categories of children. These include: 1) children with a father that did not pay child support, 2) children with a father who had no obligation, and 3) children with a father who made a payment (either partial, full, or overpayment). The average number of domain risks for children in each payment category is:

1) Children with a father that did not pay child support, Mean=2.74 Domain Risks
2) Children with a father who had no obligation, Mean=2.42 Domain Risks
3) Children with a father who made a payment, Mean=2.32 Domain Risks

Data on child support payments are based on 2008-2009 payment status. In our comparison, we adjusted by the child's race (whether or not the child was African American), gender, and grade. The data for the analysis came from child support payment records that were merged with information from multiple databases through several state agencies (See Appendix 2 for details). We conducted our analyses of the number of domain risks using Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression. OLS regression is a statistical technique used to predict levels of a continuous variable, such as a standardized test score, while accounting for other factors that are recognized as being important predictors of academic outcomes (e.g. race). In our analyses, we use OLS to tell us how non-custodial fathers' child support payments are related to the number of domain risks.

We chose OLS regression for our study because the dependent variable, number of domain risks, is a continuous outcome. OLS also provides us with the ability to account for other factors that may explain the relationship between non-custodial fathers' child support payments and number of domain risks experienced by the child. This is important because not accounting for these factors may result in reaching a false conclusion regarding the effect of child support payments.

The results of our analysis indicate that children with fathers who made *no payment* as well as those with fathers who had *no obligation* are significantly different from the comparison group (children with fathers who *made a payment*). In Figure 44, we summarize our OLS model results and report the predicted number of domain risks for children by the payment status of the father after adjusting for demographic characteristics of the students.

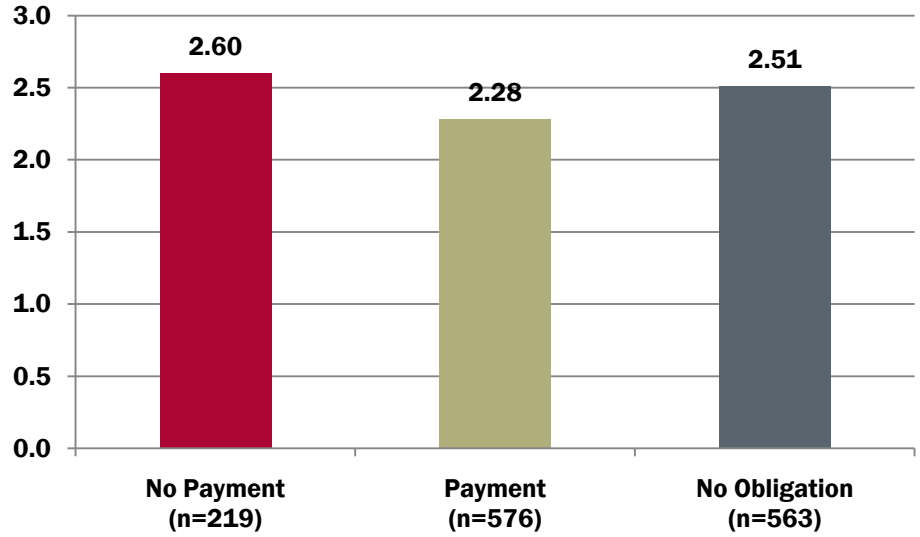
Children with a father making *no payment* or a father with *no obligation* experience a significantly higher number of domain risks than children with a father making some payment. For example, the predicted average number of domain risks for children with a father making *no payment* is 2.60. A child whose father has *no obligation* has a predicted average number of domain risks of

2.51. In contrast, a child with a father making *some payment* only experienced an average of 2.28 domain risks.

Overall, our model explains 15.3% of the variation in the number of domain risks experienced by children in our analysis. We also report the OLS regression coefficients for our model in Appendix 7. Our demographic variables in the model indicate that female children have a smaller number of domain risks and African American children experience more domain risks. In terms of age, younger children have fewer domain risks than older students.

In summary, our findings provide strong support for the relationship between the father's payment status and number of well-being domain risks for the child and the notion that any form of child support payment results in significantly better outcomes for the child. The most compelling evidence for this assertion is the similarity between the descriptive statistics for each group listed above and the predicted values in Figure 44 that have been adjusted for demographic factors, such as race and gender. These factors may explain away the differences observed in the descriptive statistics between the three groups. Instead, our findings are robust and indicate that these disparities by payment status persist after accounting for other student characteristics.

Figure 44. Predicted Number of Domain Risks for Children Based on OLS Results of NCP Pay



Well-Being Data Summaries among Selected Subpopulations

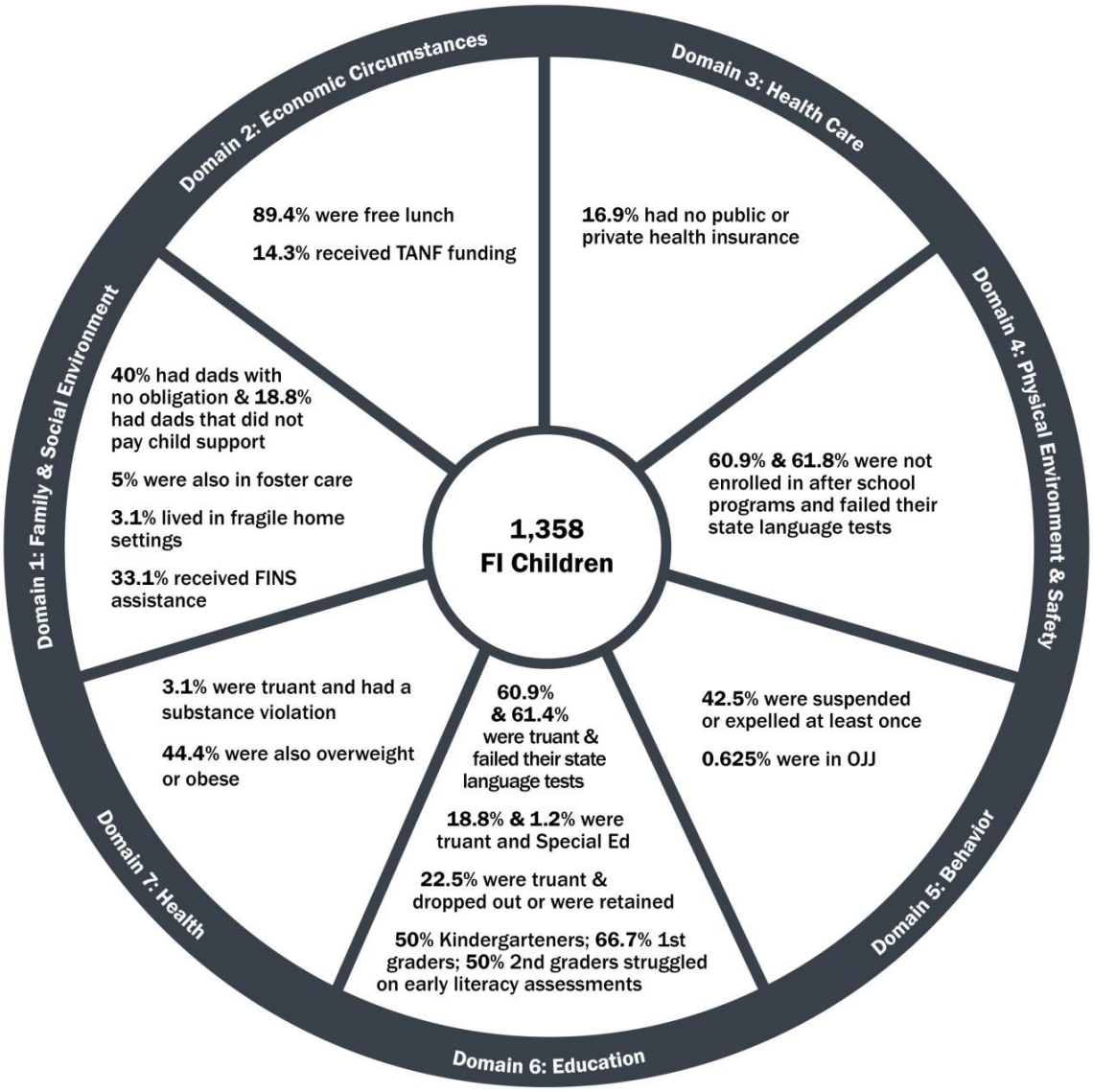
The following six pages contain tables that highlight the well-being data of specific subpopulations of FI children presented in this report. It shows how children's well-being can be considered for even smaller subpopulations of children in this group who face multiple risk factors. The groups that will be presented for this demonstration project are truant kids, those enrolled in preschool and kindergarten, the children in foster care, children whose fathers received Fatherhood intervention services while in prison, and children who are involved with FINS. The following list of data points highlights well-being risk factors from each of the six FI subpopulations:

- **Truant Children:** More than 60% failed their state language test
- **Preschoolers:** More than 20% were classified as Special Education in preschool
- **Incarcerated Fathers:** 80% - 90% failed their state Language test
- **Foster Care:** Almost 29% were classified as Special Education and nearly 75% had a non-custodial parent who had no child support obligation
- **TANF Subpopulation:** 32% of children whose family received TANF funding was either suspended or expelled from school
- **Families in Need of Services (FINS):** As much as 66% of second graders struggled with early literacy

Note that much of the data for these subpopulations involves small numbers of children. However, the numbers and percentages of the children who experience negative well-being indicators provide potential reference points as Louisiana proceeds with continued well-being assessments that look at children in the context of multiple risk factors. By annually following the well-being of children who receive specific state services and interventions aimed at stabilizing their lives, state agencies will be empowered to be more efficient at using interventions designed to improve the outcomes of these children and to ensure their self- sufficiency into adulthood.

For example, Appendix 9 gives details associated with 19 children whose school testing data were available the year before during and after their NCP's participation in the Fatherhood Initiative. The charts show the overall percentage of children who are not performing at grade level or who failed their state language tests, which decreased from 68.4% the year before participation to 52.6% during the year of participation to 47.4% the year after participation. This implies that had the Fatherhood Initiative program been structured in a certain way, the impact of services could have been tied to the overall improved outcomes of children's school performance. Also, children's outcomes could have been monitored over time to define the long-term impact of these services as well as outcome changes over time, which are examples of the ultimate intended purposes of all government-supported interventions and services—to help children with vulnerable backgrounds become self-sufficient adults despite the fact that they are growing up in fragile family environments.

Truancy Subpopulation of Fatherhood Children
Demographic Background: 11.7% were truant; 44.4% truant FI children were in grades PreK-5



* Represent 2009/10 or 2010/11 data because 2008/09 data were not available for comparison and is not intended to be definitive but rather provides a sample view of how these data sets can be examined for use in planning and tracking the outcomes of interventions on vulnerable children.

**No appropriate group available for comparison.

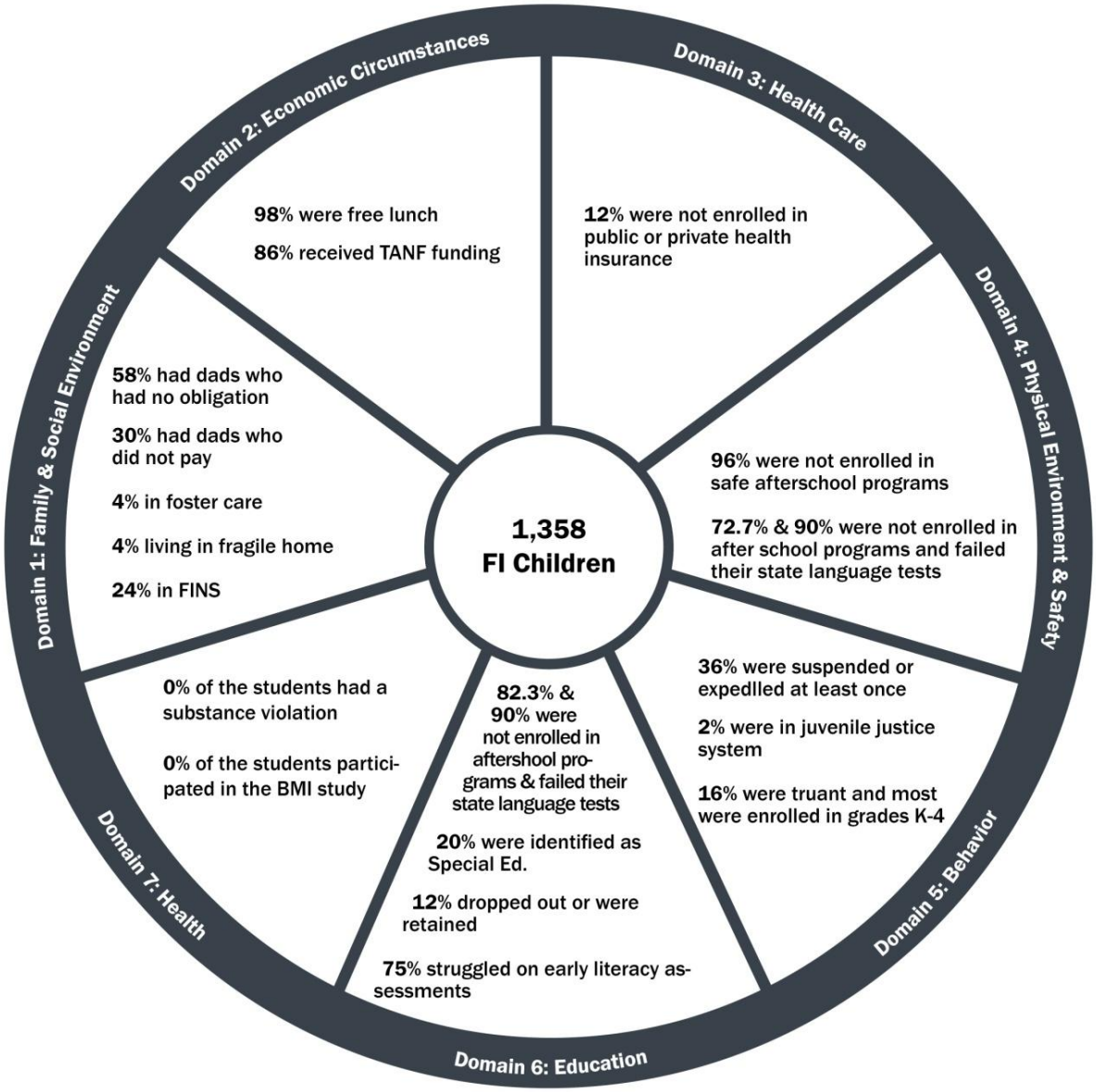
Preschool Subpopulation of Fatherhood Initiative Children**

Demographic Background: 6% were enrolled in preschool (Note: An additional 23.3% of FI children were eligible for preschool yet their data were not available in SIS)

* Represent 2009/10 or 2010/11 data because 2008/09 data were not available for comparison and is not intended to be definitive but rather provides a sample view of how these data sets can be examined for use in planning and tracking the outcomes of interventions on vulnerable children.

**No appropriate group available for comparison.

Fatherhood Initiative Children with Incarcerated Fathers Subpopulation**
Demographic Background: 3.7% had fathers who were incarcerated in 2008-09 while enrolled in the TANF Fatherhood Initiative; 63.3% were enrolled in grades K-5



* Represent 2009/10 or 2010/11 data because 2008/09 data were not available for comparison and is not intended to be definitive but rather provides a sample view of how these data sets can be examined for use in planning and tracking the outcomes of interventions on vulnerable children.

**No appropriate group available for comparison.

Foster Care Subpopulation**

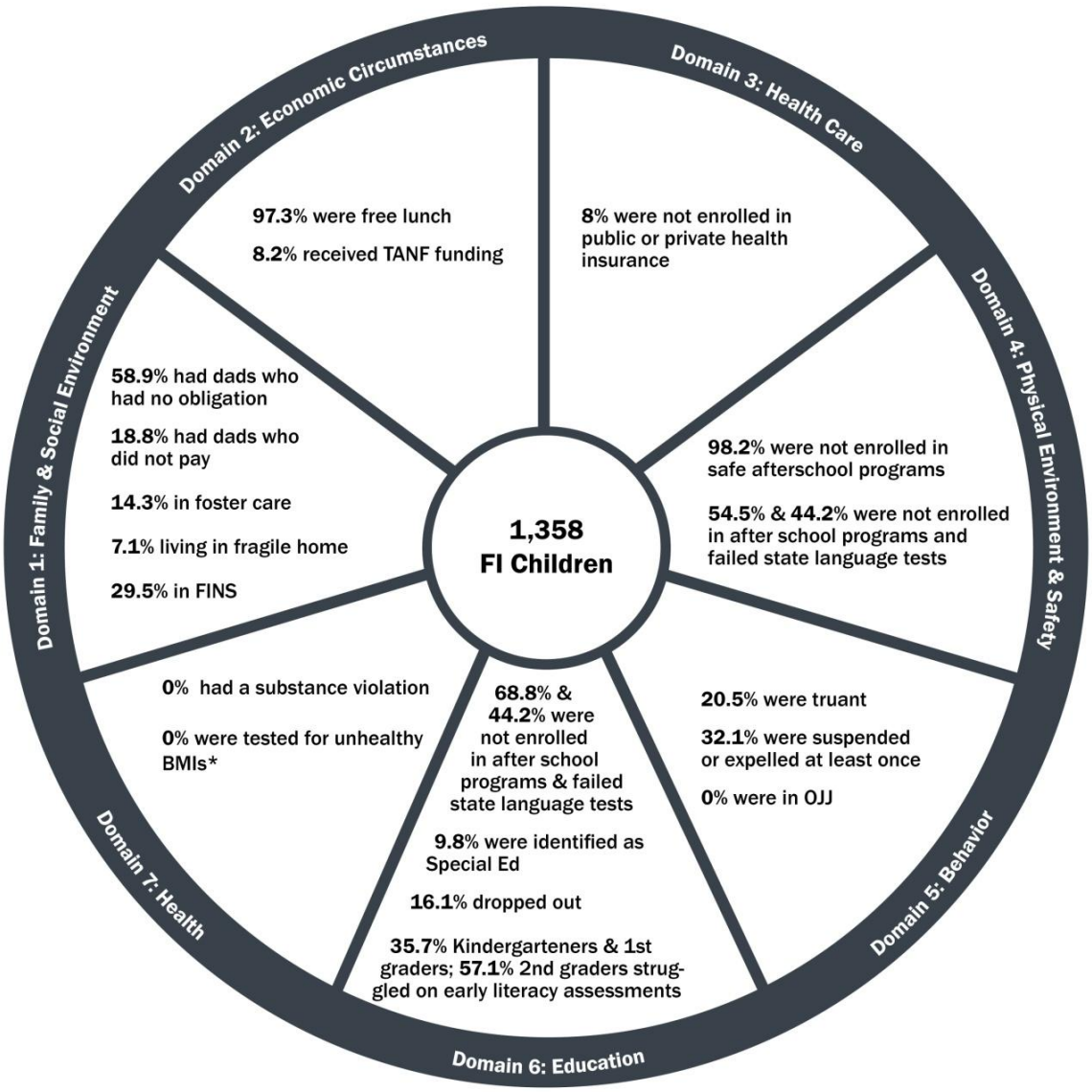
Demographic Background: 4.3% had a history in Foster Care; 54.2% were in grades K-5

* Represent 2009/10 or 2010/11 data because 2008/09 data were not available for comparison and is not intended to be definitive but rather provides a sample view of how these data sets can be examined for use in planning and tracking the outcomes of interventions on vulnerable children.

**No appropriate group available for comparison.

TANF Subpopulation**

Demographic Background: 8.2% received TANF; 48.2% of the TANF FI children were in grades 1-5

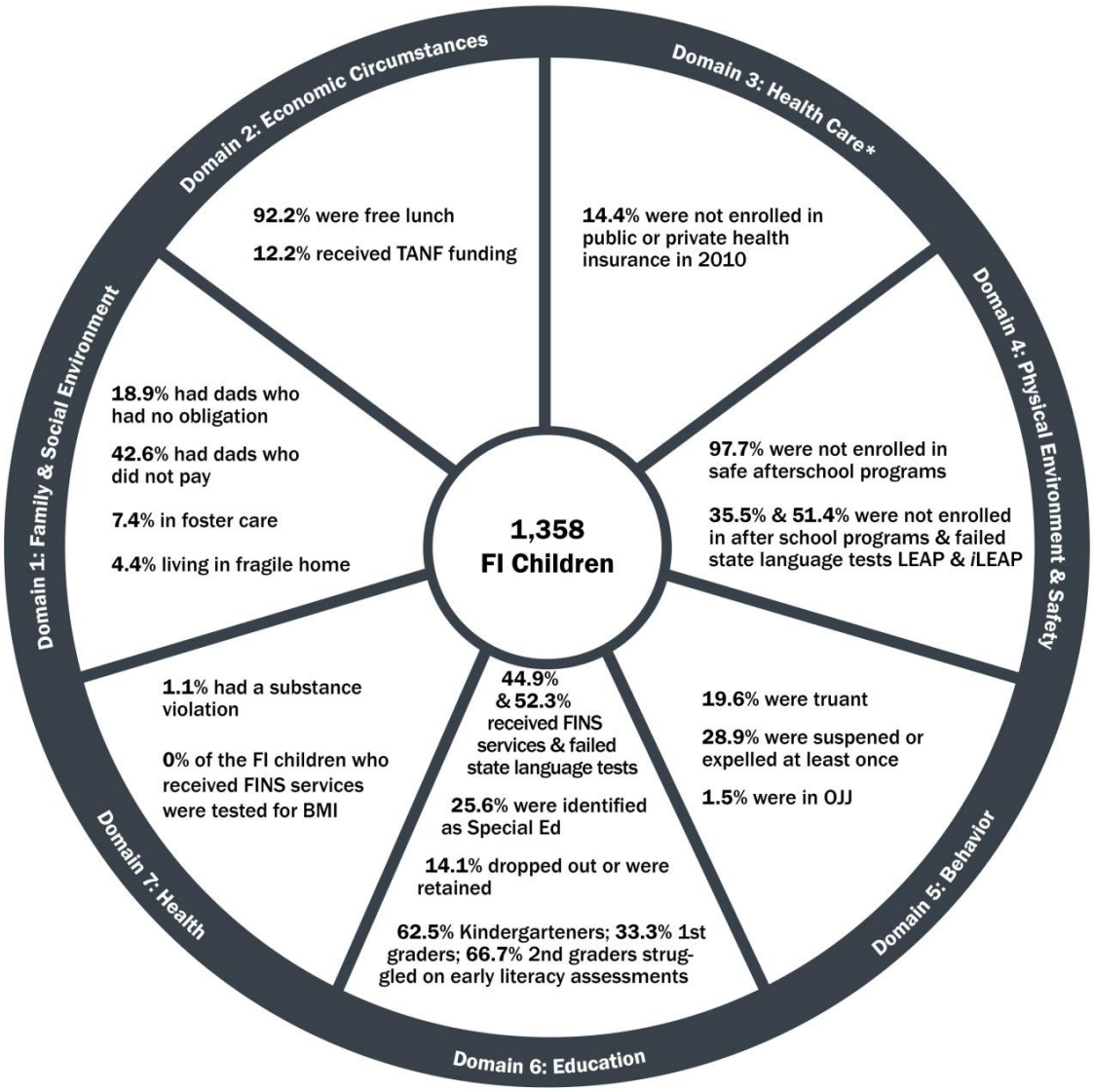


* Represent 2009/10 or 2010/11 data because 2008/09 data were not available for comparison and is not intended to be definitive but rather provides a sample view of how these data sets can be examined for use in planning and tracking the outcomes of interventions on vulnerable children.

**No appropriate group available for comparison.

FINS (Familied in Need of Services) Subpopulation**

Demographic Background: 19.9% of FI children were in families that received FINS services; 67% of the FINS FI children were in Elementary grades



* Represent 2009/10 or 2010/11 data because 2008/09 data were not available for comparison and is not intended to be definitive but rather provides a sample view of how these data sets can be examined for use in planning and tracking the outcomes of interventions on vulnerable children.

**No appropriate group available for comparison.

Recommendations

Based on the data presented in this report, several recommendations for expanding the data collaboration between TANF and Child Support Enforcement to all other state agencies are offered for consideration in preparation for the project's culminating activities. These recommendations will ensure that all state agency heads and their information technology staff have access to the discussion and future data exchange activities. The entire purpose of this discussion among all state agencies is to establish the need for data collaborations that will empower each agency to make better data driven decisions as it pertains to the well-being and outcomes of vulnerable children and families that receive services from them.

Administrative representatives from the FINS agency have already pledged informally to sign on as one of the partnering agencies whose goal is to collect and monitor the well-being data on children who encounter the judicial system through the informal FINS process as a prevention to formal judicial penalties. This informal process involves collaboration with key state agencies that can provide intervention services targeted at improving the well-being and outcomes of vulnerable children and families who are referred to the agency.

Recommendation 1: *Share this report with all state agency leaders*

One of the goals of this demonstration project is to use the analyses in this report as a starting point to initiate the discussion about data collaborations among all state agencies. That effort should begin with the presentation of the findings from this study as it relates to the well-being of children in a specific subset whose low-income fathers were offered support through the TANF funded Fatherhood Initiative as a way of encouraging them to become financially and emotionally involved in their children's lives. This report highlights the alarming fact that many children are living in conditions that impact their well-being in negative ways, including the fact that they are being raised most often in single parent low-income homes.

This report also demonstrates the myriad of data sets available on low-income children who attend public schools and who are experiencing multiple layers of risk that require the intervention and services of multiple state agencies in order for them and their families to subsist. However, this report is only a starting point for the collection and tracking of data to foster interagency collaboration aimed at improving the outcomes of children and families that depend on government services and intervention. It is only through stabilizing these children and families that Louisiana's social and economic well-being will be strengthened. It should also be noted that there are many children who are experiencing positive well-being outcomes despite their vulnerable family and living conditions. Much is to be learned by studying the characteristics that influence their improved outcomes.

Recommendation 2: *Invite state agency leaders to participate in a half-day workshop discussion about their data collaboration concerns and needs*

With the assistance and participation of their key information technology staff, state leaders are encouraged to participate in a meaningful discussion about the advantages and challenges associated with pooling data with other state agencies. This interagency sharing can facilitate the exploration and monitoring of outcomes of children who receive state services and who are growing up in vulnerable family and community environments. DCFS and its University partner are proposing a half day agenda to attract the attention and participation of all state agency leaders and their IT staff to examine the opportunities and concerns regarding the development of a new data sharing paradigm that will be designed to monitor the well-being of children and families served by each agency. Such an undertaking cannot be achieved with one agency alone. FINS has already informally expressed interest in sharing data and ideas for the planning of this workshop in the interest of showing the potential capacity of this data collaboration effort for improving their agency's operations and function.

Recommendation 3: *Encourage state agency leaders to voice their concerns regarding the legal and technical restrictions for sharing data and submit possible data collaboration solutions to resolve those barriers*

Perhaps one of the primary barriers associated with data sharing among agencies are the many privacy laws that restrict the well intended gesture of agencies sharing information on their shared clients. While those laws are important, they are often not clearly understood or they are not easy to function around, however by collaborating with other agencies that serve the same clients these barriers can be addressed. Although interagency collaborations are encouraged at the federal level, these same agencies are prohibited by legal restrictions that protect their clients' privacy at the expense of public agencies sharing resources, which includes data that could be utilized to improve the lives of those being served. Ultimately, these legal restrictions cannot be the overriding authority when there may be available procedures and processes that would allow agencies to collaborate without violating the privacy of clients. State leaders must first assemble together in order to find new avenues for improved agency operations that can improve the outcomes of children and families who receive their services.

Recommendation 4: *Challenge state agency leaders to explore strategies for using data to track their interventions and services in ways that encourage interagency collaborations for improved outcomes for vulnerable children and families*

Rather than use data to spotlight the shortcomings of other state agencies, state agency leaders have the opportunity to share data on children and families that depend on their services and interventions as opposed to placing blame and/or other agency shortcomings. The challenges associated with helping children and families overcome the impact of poverty and vulnerable living

conditions are enormous. Yet no one state agency has the capacity or the breath of services or resources to truly change the life trajectory of at-risk children and families. The only solution is for state agencies to explore ways to identify mutual goals and strategies for improvement which begins with comprehensive data driven decisions for the betterment of all Louisiana citizens.

Conclusion

The data presented in this report give a snapshot of the well-being of 1,358 Fatherhood Initiative children at one point in time. Although much of the data suggests that more than half of these children face difficulties within their home, social, and school environment, there are many who are healthy and thriving despite the challenges they endure and the threats they incur to their well-being. More qualitative research to complement the quantitative data could help inform public policy and intervention strategies devised to ensure the healthy development and well-being of these children, as well as procuring a return on all public investments.

The data on these children is rich and extensive, yet through extended data collaboration efforts with other state agencies; more can be learned in an effort to follow the outcomes of these children comprehensively. For example, there were 253 FI children who were between the ages of three and four in the 2008-09 school year, and although data on their enrollment in day care centers or programs such as Head Start was essential, it was not available for review. Such data would allow the state to monitor and ensure that every low-income child would have access to high quality early learning programs; an intervention that has proven to minimize the achievement gap. It would also allow the state to leverage any other public assistance so that all children could thrive despite their family's socioeconomic background, especially if the intent of government is to end these children's dependence on government-sponsored programs and services once they reach adulthood.

Three landmark longitudinal studies, the *Perry Preschool Project*, the *Abecedarian Project*, and the *Chicago Child-Parent Center Program*, proved the immediate and long term benefits of high quality early childhood programs for low-income children. Each study followed cohorts of children into adulthood. Compared to their counterparts who had no preschool, it was found that their participation in high quality preschool class environments provided them with the early literacy and numeracy skills they needed for long term success but were not likely to learn at home. Of these students, fewer were labeled as having learning disabilities or were enrolled in special education classes. Once these children became adults, they were more likely to graduate from high school, gain meaningful employment, become taxpaying contributors, and were less likely to commit crimes or depend on government assistance.

In an economic climate of shrinking government and practices of accountability that hold agencies responsible for tracking the outcomes of these services, following the data that comprehensively examines all of the major risk factors that threaten the healthy development of vulnerable children is everyone's best interest. It was not the intent of this demonstration project to compile these data sets and suggest quick or easy solutions. However, this type of data as well as adding key data elements as mentioned throughout this report, can be an important tool in helping Louisiana achieve its goals of providing public services in the most efficient and cost effective manner. Data driven decisions based on valid and scientifically sound research that produces solutions with long term benefits, especially when it relates to facilitating the well-being of all children is not only

necessary but crucial. It also promotes the ideal that all citizens can and should enjoy a strong quality of life. Finally, these data approaches are critical if we are to guide effective programming that is integrated across state and local agencies such as education, health, justice, and community based organizations. This collaboration strategy is necessary if we are to affect positive change in the homes and social environments of our most vulnerable children and families.

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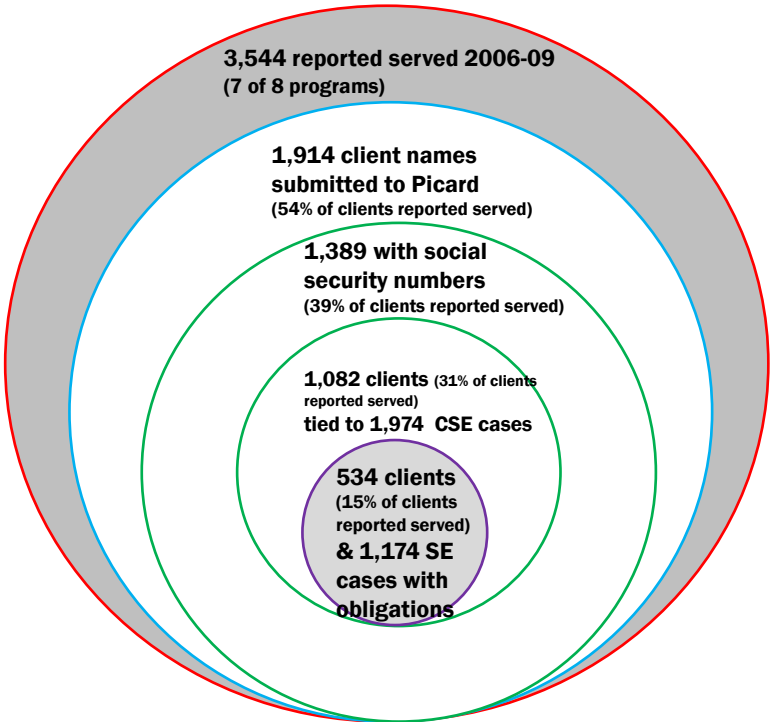
Appendices

Appendix 1: Number of Fatherhood Initiative participants reported to TANF as having been served during 2006-09 compared to the Number with active child support cases



Child Support Payments Comparison

Groups	% of child support received			
	2005 *Year Before Fatherhood Initiative*	***2006*** *Year 1 of Fatherhood Initiative*	***2007*** *Year 2 of Fatherhood Initiative*	***2008*** *Year 3 of Fatherhood Initiative*
All 8 Programs (Not based on program start dates & inconsistent obligations)	**61%** (412/693)	**65%** (473/673)	**70%** (571/810)	**72%** (655/904)
Louisiana, 2001-2007*	**55.5%**			
United States, 2001-2007*	**63.7%**			

Sources: La Support Enforcement Office; US Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, April 2000, 2002, 2004, 2006 & 2008 Annual Average.
* Only dates available for comparison. Note: Some program cohort groups are extremely small and all data are presented for comparison only.

Appendix 2: Fatherhood Initiative Children's Data Collection, Reconciliation Methodology

1. Original NCP data file on 2,445 children of 1,419 Fatherhood Initiative (FI) clients who had child support cases on file with Child Support Enforcement were obtained by Picard Center staff from the eight agencies administering the Fatherhood Initiative services to low-income non-custodial dads.

2. Records from newly created NCP file using primary identifier (Social Security Number of NCP and child) were matched in Microsoft Access to the Department of Education's 2008-2009 end of school year Student Information System (SIS) database for obtaining specific student information (1,365 matched records using this criteria and 7 records were removed due to questionable data quality resulting in 1,358 records matched).

3. Unmatched records from first inquiry are identified and a secondary inquiry is performed using secondary identifier (first name, last name as well as date of birth) to the same SIS database and 17 more records were matched using this criterion. There were a total of 1,087 unmatched records from the original NCP file not meeting the primary or secondary criteria.

4. Combined and matched NCP/SIS files were created containing primary and secondary matched records to match to the state Special Education Records (SER) database in order to locate any FI children receiving services for their specific exceptionalities.

5. After the SER matching process was completed, records for the 1,358 FI students were matched to the state Discipline file in order to find determine the type of behavior incidences that may have been committed by any children in the sample as well as the reason code related to the actual suspension or expulsion.

6. The FI student file that was matched to the state Discipline file in order to find out the results of iLEAP/LEAP testing for Spring 2009. This review was performed by grade levels, raw scores and achievement.

7. The FI student file that was matched to the Spring 2009 *i*LEAP/LEAP test results database was then matched to Department of Children and Family Services' (DCFS) Foster Care database in order find out which FI children had a case history and contained the related information.

8. The data that was matched to the Foster Care data was then matched to the Office of Juvenile Justice (OJJ) database in order to find out which Fatherhood Initiative children had a case history and contained the related information.

9. The matched OJJ file was matched to the Department of Education's Louisiana Educational Accountability Data System (LEADS) database in order to find out if participants' assigned teachers were designated as Highly Qualified as well as if students were enrolled in a Highly Qualified class.

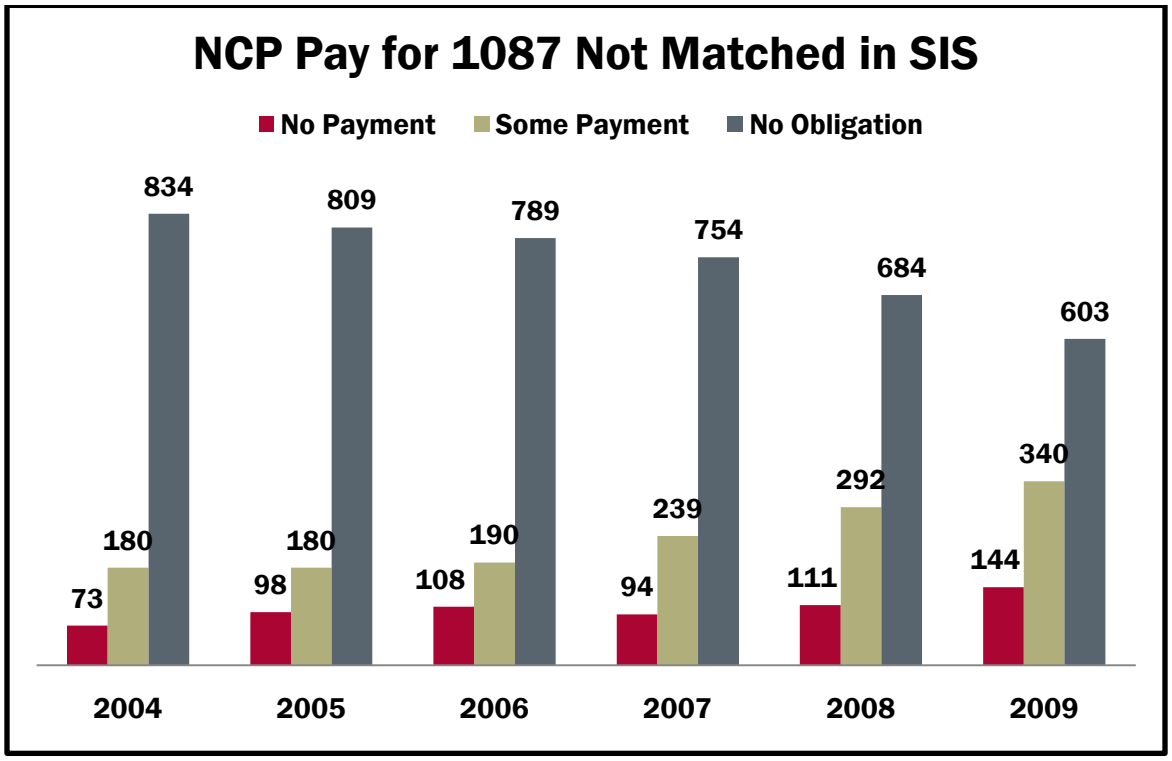
10. The matched LEADS file was matched to Department of Education's School Performance Scores (SPS) database to find out what the overall school performance scores were in the schools where the FI children attended.

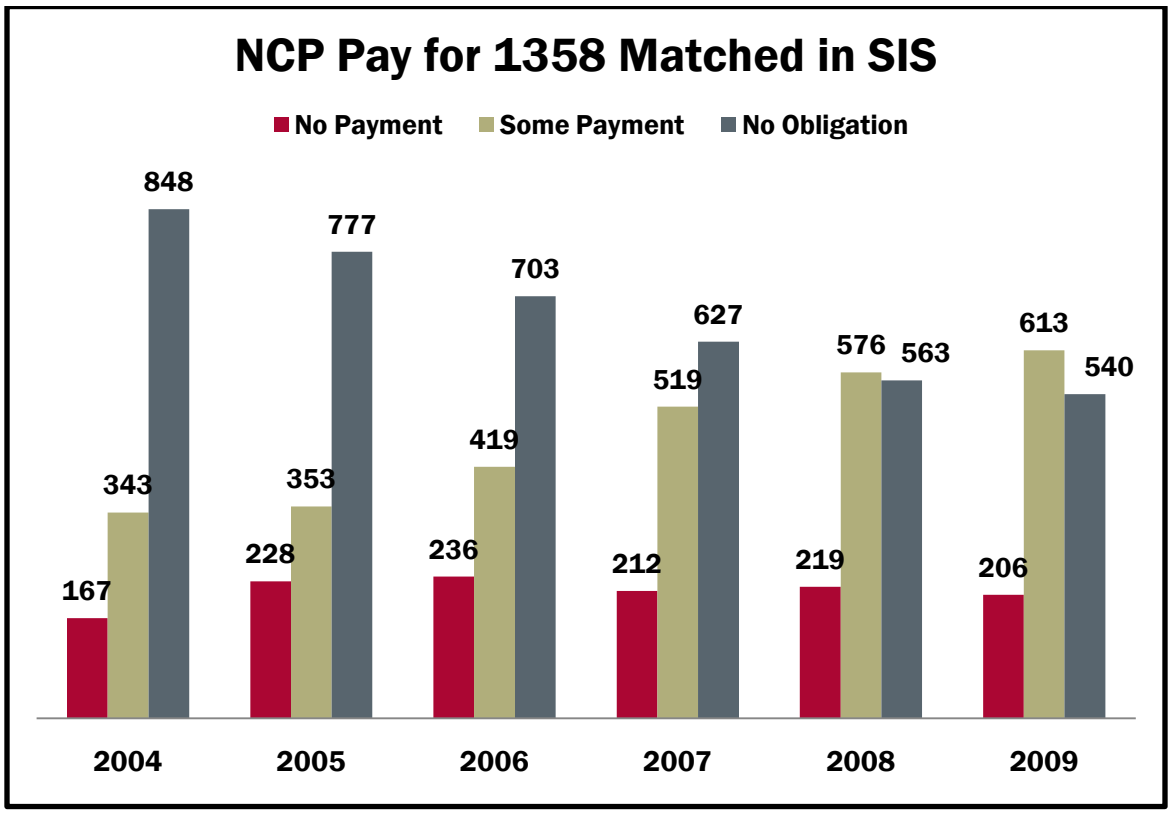
11. The matched SPS file was matched to Department of Education's DIBELS Literacy database for grades K-2 in order to determine the early literacy levels of FI participants based on their scores.

12. The matched DIBELS file was matched to Youth Service's After School database in order to find out which FI children participated in After School enrichment programs.

The After School file was matched to LA4 and the Non-public Schools Early Childhood Development (NSECD) programs database in order to find out which FI children participated in high quality early childhood state-funded Prekindergarten programs that are located in public and non-public settings.

Appendix 3: Fatherhood Initiative Children's Non-Custodial Fathers' Child Support History





Appendix 4: Risk domains based on Non-Custodial Parents' Payments

Payment x Domain Risks	Count	Percent
Made A Payment	**576**	
0	16	3%
1	164	28%
2	155	27%
3	140	24%
4	69	12%
5	26	5%
6	6	1%
No Payment	**219**	
0	0	0%
1	3	1%
2	52	24%
3	63	29%
4	55	25%
5	39	18%
6	7	3%
No Obligation	**563**	
1	9	2%
2	167	30%
3	194	34%
4	133	24%
5	50	9%
6	9	2%
7	1	0%
Grand Total	**1358**	**100%**

Domain Risks x Payment	Count	Percent
0 Domain Risks	**16**	
Made A Payment	16	100%
1 Domain Risk	**176**	
Made A Payment	164	93%
No Payment	3	2%
No Obligation	9	5%
2 Domain Risks	**374**	
Made A Payment	155	41%
No Payment	52	14%
No Obligation	167	45%
3 Domain Risks	**397**	
Made A Payment	140	35%
No Payment	63	16%
No Obligation	194	49%
4 Domain Risks	**257**	
Made A Payment	69	27%
No Payment	55	21%
No Obligation	133	52%
5 Domain Risks	**115**	
Made A Payment	26	23%
No Payment	39	34%
No Obligation	50	43%
6 Domain Risks	**22**	
Made A Payment	6	27%
No Payment	7	32%
No Obligation	9	41%
7 Domain Risks	**1**	
No Obligation	1	100%
Grand Total	**1358**	

Appendix 5: Risk Indicators per Well-Being Domain for 1,358 FI Children

	Fatherhood Initiative Students
Demographic Background	**Demographic Profile**
Domain 1: *Family & Social Environment*	–Child had a NCP who has no obligation or who does not pay child support –History in Foster Care – Family lived in a *fragile home settings* – Family received FINS services
Domain 2: *Economic Circumstances*	–Family income based on *free lunch* or *reduced lunch* status –Family received TANF assistance
Domain 3: *Health Care**	–Child lacked health insurance coverage
Domain 4: *Physical Environment & Safety*	–Child was not enrolled in *after school programs* and *failed state language tests*
Domain 5: *Behavior*	–Child was truant –Child was suspended or expelled at least once –Child was in the state juvenile system (OJJ)
Domain 6: *Education*	–Child was identified as in need of Special Education services –Child *failed state language test* –Child *dropped out of school or was retained* –Child was in K-2nd grade and struggled on *early literacy assessments*
Domain 7: *Health*	–Had a *substance violation* –Tested for BMI and was overweight or obese

Appendix 6: Louisiana Department of Education State Testing Summary Review & Acronym List

ELA: English Language Arts Test

All state testing programs at all grade levels have an ELA test. The ELA test measures concepts and skills in six of the seven English language arts content standards. The content standards include:

Standard 1: Students read, comprehend, and respond to a range of materials, using a variety of strategies for different purposes.

Standard 2: Students write competently for a variety of purposes and audiences,

Standard 3: Students communicate using standard English grammar, usage, sentence structure, punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and handwriting.

Standard 5: Students locate, select, and synthesize information from a variety of texts, media, references, and technological sources to acquire and communicate knowledge.

Standard 6: Students read, analyze, and respond to literature as a record of life Experiences

Standard 7: Students apply reasoning and problem-solving skills to their reading, writing, speaking, listening, viewing, and visually representing.

For grades 3, 5, 6, and 7, the ELA test consists of four subtests, which are administered over two days: Writing, Using Information Resources, Reading, Part 1 (Vocabulary) and Part 2 (Comprehension), and Language. The ELA tests at grades 4, 8, and 10 have four sessions: Writing, Using Information Resources, Reading and Responding, and Proofreading.

DIBELS: Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills

DIBELS are a set of procedures and measures for assessing the acquisition of early literacy skills from kindergarten through sixth grade. They are constructed to be short (one minute) fluency measures used to regularly monitor the development of early literacy and early reading skills. The DIBELS measures were specifically designed to assess the Big Ideas of early literacy: Phonological Awareness, Alphabetic Principle, Fluency with Connected Text, Vocabulary, and Comprehension.

***i*LEAP: Integrated Louisiana Educational Assessment Program**

The *i*LEAP tests are administered in grades 3, 5, 6, 7, and 9 and align with Louisiana's content standards, benchmarks, and grade-level expectations in English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies. Ninth grade students only take the English Language Arts and Math portions of the test. The *i*LEAP is referred to as an "integrated" LEAP because it combines a norm referenced test, which compares a student's test results to the performance of students in a national sample, with a criterion-referenced test, which reports student results in terms of the state's achievement levels.

GEE: Graduate Exit Examination

The GEE is administered in grades 10 and 11. High school students must score Approaching Basic or above on the English and math portions of the exam, and Approaching Basic or above on either the science or social studies components of the test in order to graduate. The GEE requires high school students to exhibit sufficient knowledge and skills to be eligible for a high school diploma.

LEAP: Louisiana Educational Assessment Program

The LEAP tests are administered in grades 4 and 8. LEAP is a test that measures students' knowledge and skills in English Language Arts, math, science and social studies to see how well they have mastered the state's standards. For students in grades 4 and 8, the English Language Arts and Math portions of the LEAP test are promotional tests. To pass their grade, students must achieve a combination of at least *Approaching Basic* on one part and at least *Basic* on the other. The LEAP tests measure whether grade 4 and grade 8 students have adequate knowledge and skills to progress to the next grade.

The five achievement levels a student can earn on state tests are:

Advanced - A student at this level has demonstrated superior performance beyond the level of mastery.

Mastery - A student at this level has demonstrated competency over challenging subject matter and is well prepared for the next level of schooling.

Basic - A student at this level has demonstrated only the fundamental knowledge and skills needed for the next level of schooling.

Approaching Basic - A student at this level has only partially demonstrated the fundamental knowledge and skills needed for the next level of schooling.

Unsatisfactory - A student at this level has not demonstrated the fundamental knowledge and skills needed for the next level of schooling.

Appendix 7: Ordinary Least Square Regression Analyses of Number of Risk Domains

	Attendance	
	b	s.e.
Father's Payment Status		
No Payment	0.317***	0.091
No Obligation	0.221**	0.069
Some Payment	---	---
Grade		
PreK/K	-1.197***	0.120
1st – 3rd	-0.609***	0.105
4th – 6th	-0.140	0.108
7th – 8th	0.157	0.124
Highschool	---	---
Gender (1=Female, 0=Male)	-0.220***	0.062
Race (1=African American, 0=Other Race Group)	0.322***	0.073
Intercept	2.553***	0.113
R2	0.153	
N	1359	
*p<.05, **p<.01. ***p<.001		

Appendix 8: Data Sources for all Figures

Figure 1. Fatherhood Initiative Children's Well-Being at a Glance
Louisiana Department of Education, 2008-2009; Youth Services, 2008-2009; Department of Children and Family Services 2000-2010; Picard Center, 2010; Office of Juvenile Justice (Office of Youth Development), 2008-2009; Louisiana Supreme Court, 2000-2010.

Figure 2. Identifiable Records of 2,445 Children Examined in this Study
Department of Children and Family Services and Louisiana Department of Education, 2008-09.

Figure 3. Map of Persistent Child Poverty and the School Locations of FI Children
County Typology Codes, Economic Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, 2004.

Figure 4. Overall Income of Fatherhood Initiative Children Based on Lunch Status
Department of Children and Family Services & Louisiana Department of Education, 2008-09.

Figure 5. Overall Race of Fatherhood Initiative Children and LA Low-Income Kids
Department of Children and Family Services & Louisiana Department of Education, 2008-09.

Figure 6. Overall Gender of Fatherhood Initiative Children and LA Low-Income Children
Department of Children and Family Services & Louisiana Department of Education, 2008-09.

Figure 7. Overall Fatherhood Initiative Non-Custodial Parent Child Support Payment
Department of Children and Family Services, 2008-09.

Figure 8. School Lunch Status of FI Children and NCP Pay
Department of Children and Family Services & Louisiana Department of Education, 2008-09.

Figure 9. FI Children in Parishes with High Rates of Single Parent Households.
American Community Survey 5-year Estimates, U.S. Census Bureau, 2010.

Figure 10. Multiple Family Risk Factors at a Glance
Louisiana Department of Education, 2008-2009; Department of Children and Family Services 2000-2010; Louisiana Supreme Court, 2000-2010.

Figure 11. FI Children and LA Low-Income Children with Foster Care Experience
Louisiana Department of Education, 2000-2010.

Figure 12. FI Children's Foster Care Participation by Race & Gender
Louisiana Department of Education, 2008-2009; Department of Children and Family Services 2000-2010.

Figure 13. NCP Pay Comparison between FI Children in and not in Foster Care by Gender & Race
Louisiana Department of Education, 2008-2009; Department of Children and Family Services 2000-2010.

Figure 14. Unemployment Rates and Domicile of FI Children
Local Area Unemployment Statistics, U.S. Bureau of Labor, December 2009-November 2010 Averages.

Figure 15. Fatherhood Initiative Children's Family Income Based on School Lunch Status
Louisiana Department of Education, 2008-2009; Department of Children and Family Services 2008-09.

Figure 16. School Lunch Status of FI Children and NCP Pay
Louisiana Department of Education, 2008-2009; Department of Children and Family Services 2008-09.

Figure 17. Free Lunch FI Children Based on NCP Pay
Louisiana Department of Education, 2008-2009; Department of Children and Family Services 2008-09.

Figure 18. Comparison of Overall FI Children and Subgroups of Recipients of TANF Cash Assistance
Louisiana Department of Education, 2008-2009; Department of Children and Family Services 2008-09.

Figure 19. NCP Pay of FI Children found in SIS Compared to Recipients of TANF Cash Assistance
Louisiana Department of Education, 2008-2009; Department of Children and Family Services 2008-09.

Figure 20. Residents without Health Insurance
American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau, 2009.

Figure 21. Health Insurance Coverage of 1,358 Fatherhood Initiative Children
Department of Children and Family Services 2008-09.

Figure 22. FI Children's Domicile near Environmentally Hazardous Areas
Toxic Release Inventory (TRI) National Analysis, Environmental Protection Agency, 2009.

Figure 23. Crime Rates and FI Kids' Domicile
County-Level Detailed Arrest and Offense Data, National Archive of Criminal Justice Data, 2007.

Figure 24. After School Enrollment of FI Children and NCP Payment
Department of Children and Family Services and Youth Services, 2008-09.

Figure 25. NCP Pay and FI Children Enrolled and NOT Enrolled in After School Programs
Department of Children and Family Services and Youth Services, 2008-09.

Figure 26. LEAP & *i*LEAP Failure of Fatherhood Initiative NOT Enrolled in After School
Louisiana Department of Education, 2008-2009; Department of Children and Family Services 2008-09.

Figure 27. School Performance Scores of FI Children and LA Free Lunch Children
School Performance Scores, Louisiana Department of Education, 2008-2009; Department of Children and Family Services 2008-09.

Figure 28. FI Children who had at least one Serious Disciplinary Occurrence
Louisiana Department of Education, 2008-2009; Department of Children and Family Services 2008-09.

Figure 29. NCP Pay Comparison for FI Children with and without at least One Serious Behavior Incident
Louisiana Department of Education, 2008-2009; Department of Children and Family Services 2008-09.

Figure 30. Truant Students
Louisiana Department of Education, 2008-2009; Department of Children and Family Services 2008-09.

Figure 31. 160 Truant FI Children by Race, Gender & NCP Pay
Louisiana Department of Education, 2008-2009; Department of Children and Family Services 2008-09.

Figure 32. Special Education Classification
Special Education Reporting System (SERS) Louisiana Department of Education, 2008-2009; Department of Children and Family Services 2008-09.

Figure 33. FI and Low-Income LA Children DIBELS Scores for those who are Demonstrating Performing Pre-Reading Skills at Grade Level
Ensuring Literacy for All, Dynamic Indicators of Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS), Louisiana Department of Education, 2008-2009; Department of Children and Family Services 2008-09.

Figure 34. Percentage of Louisiana Students Who Scored Basic or Above on the LEAP Language Test over 10 Years
Louisiana Department of Education, *the Urgency of Now*, 2010.

Figure 35. Fatherhood Initiative & Free Lunch Students who performed Below Basic on State Tests
Louisiana Department of Education, 2008-2009; Department of Children and Family Services 2008-09.

Figure 36. NCP Pay of FI Free Lunch Children who Failed State Tests Compared to their FI Counterparts who Passed.
Louisiana Department of Education, 2008-2009; Department of Children and Family Services 2008-09.

Figure 37. FI Children who Dropped out of School Compared to LA Free Lunch Students.
Louisiana Department of Education, 2008-2009; Department of Children and Family Services 2008-09.

Figure 38. NCP Pay of FI Children who Dropped out in Grades 7 – 12.
Louisiana Department of Education, 2008-2009; Department of Children and Family Services 2008-09.

Figure 39. Grade Retention of Fatherhood Initiative Children
Louisiana Department of Education, 2008-2009; Department of Children and Family Services 2008-09.

Figure 40. Discipline for Possession of Alcohol, Tobacco, or Controlled Substances
Louisiana Department of Education, 2008-2009; Department of Children and Family Services 2008-09.

Figure 41. Obesity Rates and FI Children Domicile
Diabetes Data & Trends, Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2008; Department of Children and Family Services 2008-09.

Figure 42. Summary of Children with negative indictors across multiple well-being domains
Louisiana Department of Education, 2008-09; Picard Center for Child Development and Lifelong Learning, 2009; Youth Services, 2008-09; Office of Youth Development 2008-09; Department of Children and Family Services, 2008-09; Department of Health and Hospitals, 2010; and the Louisiana Supreme Court, 2008-10.

Figure 43. NCP Child Support Payment Comparison between FI Children with risks in at least One Well-Being Domain and Risks in Five Well-Being Domains.
Louisiana Department of Education, 2008-09; Picard Center for Child Development and Lifelong Learning, 2009; Youth Services, 2008-09; Office of Youth Development 2008-09; Department of Children and Family Services, 2008-09; Department of Health and Hospitals, 2010; and the Louisiana Supreme Court, 2008-10.

Figure 44. Predicted Number of Domain Risks for Children Based on OLS Results of NCP Pay
Picard Center analysis based on Department of Children and Family Services data, 2008-09.

Appendix 9: Tying NCP's Fatherhood Initiative Enrollment to Children's Language Test Performance[1]

Child	BEFORE FI Enrollment		DURING FI Enrollment		AFTER FI Enrollment	
	Grade	Performance	Grade	Performance	Grade	Performance
1	3	UNS	*4	APP	*4	APP
2	3	APP	3	MAS	*4	BAS
3	5	APP	6	APP	7	BAS
4	3	APP	*4	BAS	5	APP
5	6	UNS	*8	UNS	*8	UNS
6	3	BAS	*4	BAS	5	APP
7	6	MAS	7	BAS	*8	MAS
8	6	APP	7	APP	*8	APP
9	3	APP	*4	APP	*4	UNS
10	5	BAS	6	BAS	7	BAS
11	7	APP	*8	APP	9	APP
12	5	APP	6	UNS	7	BAS
13	6	APP	7	UNS	*8	APP
14	*4	APP	5	BAS	6	BAS
15	*4	UNS	5	BAS	6	APP
16	*4	BAS	5	BAS	6	BAS
17	*8	APP	9	UNS	*10	BAS
18	*4	BAS	5	APP	6	BAS
19	*4	BAS	5	BAS	6	BAS

2007-08 Language Performance		%
MAS	1	31.6%
BAS	5	
APP	10	68.4%
UNS	3	
Grand Total	19	100%

2008-09 Language Performance		%
MAS	1	47.4%
BAS	8	
APP	6	52.6%
UNS	4	
Grand Total	19	100%

2009-10 Language Performance		%
MAS	1	52.6%
BAS	9	
APP	7	47.4%
UNS	2	
Grand Total	19	100%

Test Performance Levels:

ADV=Advanced
MAS=Mastery
BAS=Basic
APP=Approaching Basic
UNS= Unsatisfactory

Note: All levels below Basic are considered failure in this report because it is an indication that students are not performing at grade level.

* Denotes LEAP testing grade levels in which below basic performance levels may result in students not advancing to the next grade.

[1] Of the 52 children whose NCPs FI enrollment dates were available, there were only 19 students (or 36.5%) who had Language test performance scores available for before, during and after FI participation comparisons. The remaining children were either in K-3 grades that are not covered by LEAP and *i*LEAP testing or did not have scores for all three years.

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