

---

# How Does A Milwaukee Family Resource Center Promote Competent Parenting? Silver Spring Neighborhood Center Family Resource Center

*Sally Lundeen*  
*Director*

**Goals:** The Silver Spring Neighborhood Center Family Resource Center (SSNC FRC) is a primary prevention project designed to: 1) provide educational and support services which promote positive parenting for parents of children newborn to three years of age; 2) provide programming for children newborn to three years of age which fosters health, growth and development, and positive self-esteem; 3) promote an increase in self-esteem and improvement in coping skills in parents of young children through involvement in a variety of educational, social, and recreational programs offered on-site; 4) improve access for families with young children to a variety of health services; and 5) enable families to access other community resources to meet their needs.

**History:** SSNC is a private, not-for-profit, human service agency founded in 1958. Following the settlement house tradition, it offers a comprehensive range of educational, recreational, employment, emergency and health programs, and services. A hallmark of SSNC has been its openness to the development of collaborative arrangements with other providers. During the past four years, this philosophy has reached a new level through the integration of an extensive program of health services provided on-site at SSNC by the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Nursing Center.

The SSNC FRC was established in July 1990 as a collaborative project of Silver Spring Neighborhood Center (SSNC) and the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Nursing Center (UWM-NC). The opening of the FRC represented a major expansion of an existing Positive Parenting Program.

**Community:** Located on the northwest side of Milwaukee, the SSNC serves the residents of Westlawn, the largest federally subsidized housing development in Wisconsin, and the surrounding community. Of the 726 housing units in Westlawn, 89% receive public assistance and 80% are headed by single female parents. Ninety percent of the residents are African American, 5% other minorities, and 5% Caucasian. It is a young population, with almost 70% of Westlawn residents under 29 years of age; 51% 17 years of age and under, and 10% birth to 3 years of age. In the northwest side community which surrounds and includes Westlawn, 43.8% of the residents are African American and 51.7% are Caucasian.

***We cannot really grasp where we are going until we better understand our past.***

**Services:** The major programs and services provided to parents of young children include: Positive Parenting Classes; nurse clinician and community parent advocate home visits; telephone support; family events and field trips; structured parent/child interaction sessions; teen parent programs; mini workshops; child care/learning activities; childbirth education; primary health care/screening/health education for adults and children; on-site and home-based mental health counseling; developmental screening for children; women's support groups; advocacy and resource linking; and transportation for participants.

A partial list of other comprehensive services available on-site include: family living skills classes; recreational and social activities, GED classes and Adult Basic Skills Classes; employment placement services; emergency services (food pantry/clothing bank/energy assistance); afterschool children's programs; daycare; kindergarten; alternative middle and high school; and meal programs for children and seniors.

**Participants:** The FRC was established to serve all area families with children newborn to three years of age. During the first year of FRC operation, 270 families participated in FRC programs and services. In addition, the comprehensive collaborative model provides support services for area residents from the very young to the very old. Over 600-700 people pass through the doors of SSNC daily.

**Staff:** The multidisciplinary team of the FRC includes a .60 FTE project Coordinator, a full-time Early Childhood Specialist, a full-time community parent Advocate, four part-time Child Care Assistants, a part-time Family Nurse Practitioner, a part-time Mental Health Nurse, and a part-time secretary. Numerous volunteers including an Advisory Board provide valuable assistance in planning, promoting, implementing, and evaluating Family Resource Center programs and services. Administrative support is provided by SSNC and the UWM-NC.

**Outreach:** Outreach is an important component of all SSNC Family Resource Center programs and services. Home visits by the Community Parent Advocates and Nurse Clinicians provide support, parent education, referral, crisis intervention, and health care. Telephone warmline contacts are utilized to provide support, and to link families with needed services at SSNC or other community resources. Other outreach activities include quarterly mailing of the SSNC newsletter to 5,000 area businesses and residents; mailing of flyers and brochures to families with newborns and young children; door-to-door contacts; and special events such as family carnivals and African American cultural events.

**Evaluation:** Several methods of evaluation are utilized for the various FRC programs and services. Written and telephone satisfaction surveys are used to obtain participant feedback. Detailed service records are maintained to document utilization by families over time. A computerized data system is utilized by the UWM Nursing Center to document: (1) the needs of parents and children served by the nurse clinicians; (2) the nursing services provided; and (3) the outcome of the services. An evaluation study completed in December 1990 of the group parent education program utilized confidential in-depth interviews with participants and staff to document positive outcomes on several indicators related to effective parenting. A variety of indicators are also used to measure empowerment of parents and increased self sufficiency such as effective utilization of community resources, continued education and increased financial security through employment.

**Funding:** Silver Spring Neighborhood Center is a United Way supported agency. The FRC's current annual budget of \$114,479 is derived from the following sources: 66% from the Wisconsin Children's Trust Fund; 22% from United Way Community Initiatives Fund; 4% from Milwaukee County CAP Network. The comprehensive range of educational, recreational, emergency, health, and employment services available on-site is made possible by large in-kind contributions from over 15 collaborating agencies including UWM Nursing Center, Social Development Commission, Milwaukee Public Schools, Milwaukee Area Technical College, and Milwaukee Urban League. A variety of other organizations including the CAP Fund Be-A-Buddy Program, Hope Network, St. Joseph's Hospital Women and Infant's Center, and Hunger Task Force generously contributed gifts and needed supplies for FRC families.

**Suggestions:** Family Resource Centers which are effective in empowering economically disadvantaged families provide a comprehensive range of community-based programs and services designed to address the multiple needs and stressors faced by those families. However, it is not enough for a grocery list of services to be "available" at one location. The programs and services must also be "acceptable" to participating families that is they must be culturally appropriate and delivered by a culturally competent team of providers who respect and recognize the strengths of all families and individuals being served.

Silver Spring Neighborhood Center Family Resource Center, 5460 N. 64th Street, Milwaukee, WI 53201, (414) 463-7950, Tommie Novick, Project Coordinator

*Sally Lundeen R.N., Ph.D., F.A.A.N., is Director of the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Nursing Center. Dr. Lundeen's areas of research include nurse-managed centers, community health administration, and independent nursing practice. Studies.*