

Center (CFC) intervention staff will ensure a smooth transition into use of the PFS model. In addition, the CFC website will offer material support (videos for working with parents, forms, videos for parents to view, coaching support, etc.) and a venue for daily communication and professional support to all school staff implementing the PFS, especially the family support specialist.

We suggest that school staff designated for the family support specialist position currently have considerable contact with families and parents, professional training in behavior management, and experience working with parents. Training and support services will be tailored to the needs of each participating middle school.



Parents will be invited into a partnership to support their student by increased monitoring and positive behavior support.

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Drs. Tom Dishion and Beth Stormshak, child psychologists and University of Oregon faculty, will actively supervise and engage in trainings. In addition to in-service workshops and intensive training sessions, CFC staff will provide ongoing coaching and consultation during the course of two years. Drs. Dishion and Stormshak have more than 20 years of experience developing, designing, and implementing family support interventions that have had significant positive impacts on families and adolescents in Oregon public schools.

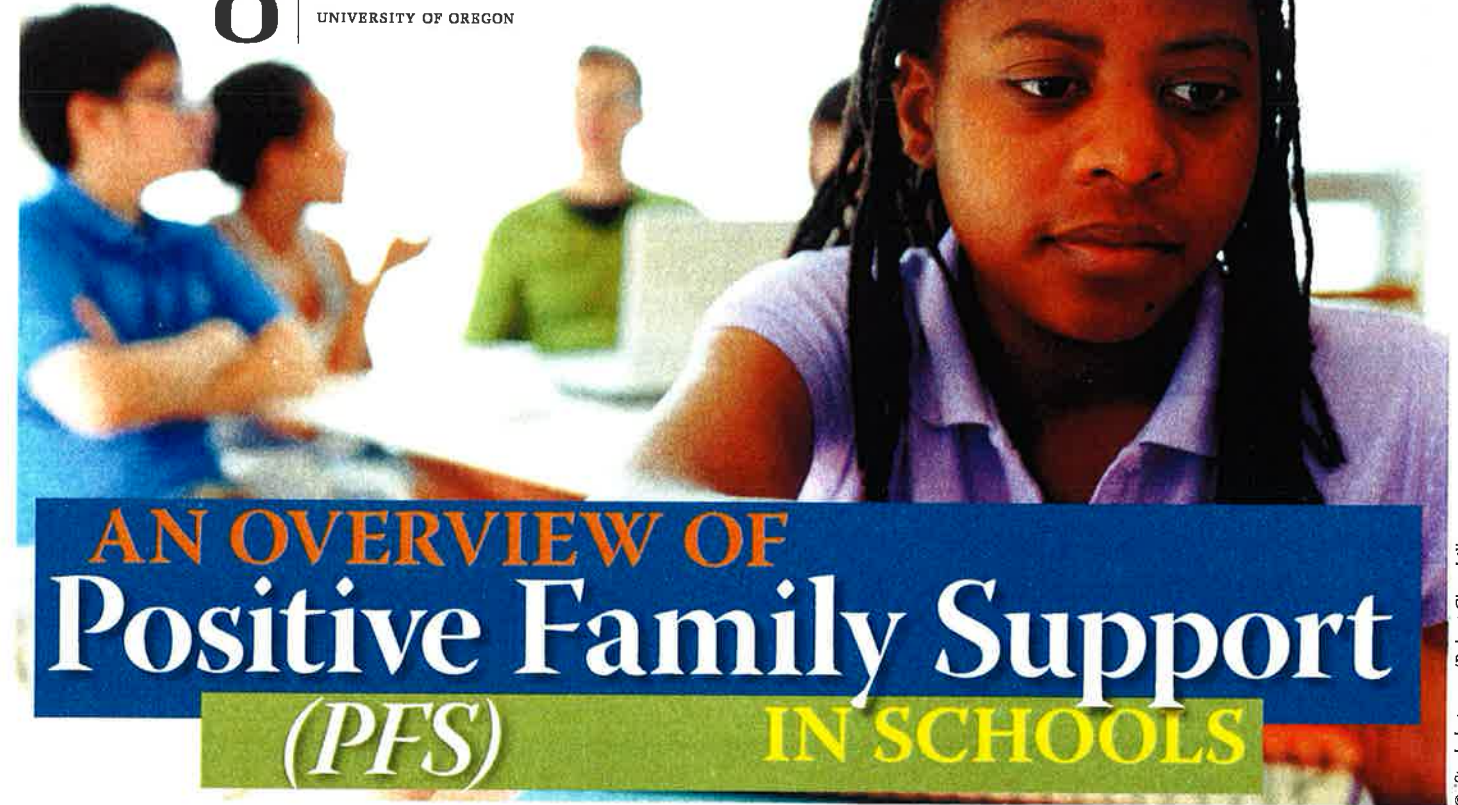
If you have questions about the PFS model, training, or implementation strategies, please call Kevin Moore, PhD, at 541-206-3739.

Child and Family Center

195 West 12th Ave • Eugene, Oregon 97401
541.346.4805 • <http://cfc.uoregon.edu>



Child and Family Center



AN OVERVIEW OF Positive Family Support (PFS) IN SCHOOLS

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A School-Based System for Forming Effective Partnerships with Parents in Public School Settings

AN IMPORTANT PART of the professional role of principals, counselors, and teachers is to report and problem solve issues of student behavior and academic progress to parents. This can be a rewarding and positive experience when students are successful. When students are involved in problem behavior or are falling behind academically, however, communications with parents can be challenging and stressful.

The Positive Family Support (PFS) model is designed to accomplish three goals: increase

the effectiveness and reduce the stress of home-school communications; encourage appropriate parent support, involvement, and monitoring of student progress; and provide a tested strategy of constructively engaging families to effectively address and remediate student behavioral or academic difficulties. PFS is based on a solid body of research and can be implemented with the appropriate leadership in any public school environment.

Research shows that using a system of positive family support in the public school environment can have the following effects



Parents will be engaged in only those sessions that fit their needs, as determined in the Family Check-Up.

on students: improved grades, reduced absenteeism, reduced drug use through the high school years, reduced antisocial behavior through the high school years, reduced school dropout, and decreased adolescent depression. Targets of the PFS model are increased satisfaction of school staff who work with families; improved morale of families, students, and school staff; and decreased problem behavior in the school environment. Furthermore, scientific assessment of the program outcomes will further our understanding of the middle school environment and help determine future policies that affect public school services and funding.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The PFS model involves three tiers of services (see Figure 1). The first tier applies to all students and is integrated with existing communications with parents such as report cards, newsletters, and parent-school meetings. The goal is to help parents be more aware of the school's expectations for positive behavior, be informed about how to promote student positive behavior, and to give parents research-based information about parenting teenagers and specific regular feedback regarding their student's attendance, behavior, and completion of school tasks.

The second tier of PFS is a home-school communication plan. Some students and their parents require more-frequent feedback to support the adolescent's academic progress and appropriate behavior in school. The second tier entails working with parents to provide incentives for students on good days (defined by attendance, positive behavior, and completion of tasks). The home-school communication plan for targeted students will be guided by the family support specialist, who will meet with parents proactively to encourage a positive behavior support plan in the home. This tier

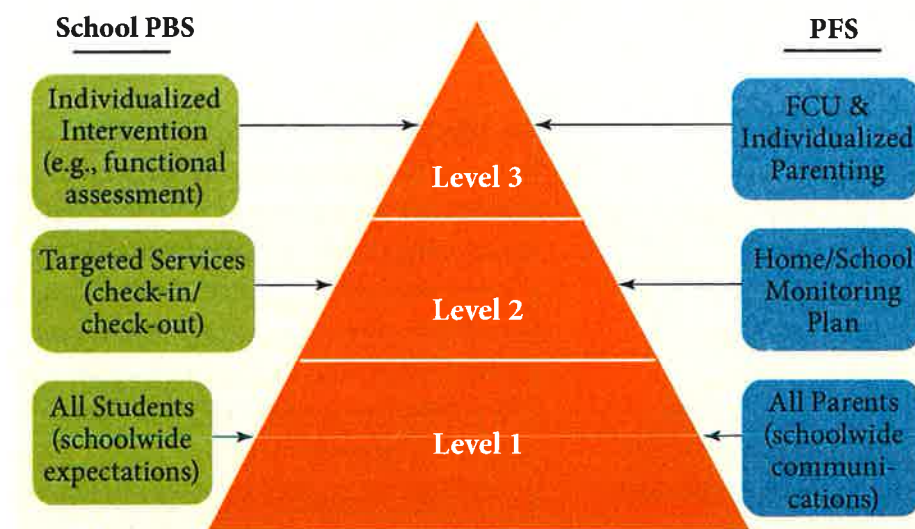


FIGURE 1. The Positive Family Support Model (PFS) and the Family Check-Up (FCU)

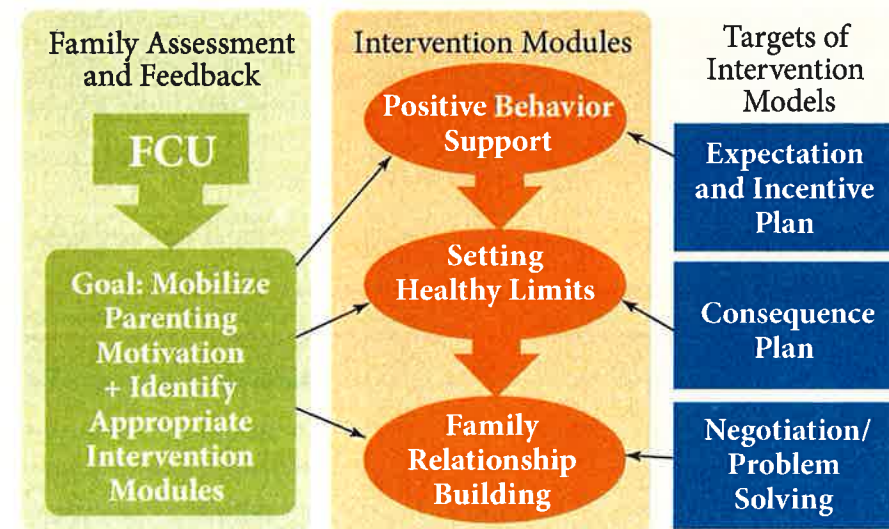


FIGURE 2. Overview of the Third Tier FCU Intervention

is consistent with the popular school-based strategy called “check in and check out.”

The third tier of PFS is the Family Check-Up and linked family support services (see Figure 2). The family support specialist provides caregivers with specific strategies for improving student behavior at home and/or school. Although this is a voluntary service for parents, research shows it can be very important for turning around students otherwise headed down the road of academic failure or more serious forms of problem behavior. The Family Check-Up involves a brief assessment of parent-child interaction regarding school-related issues, feedback to the parent by the family support specialist, and three possible follow-up sessions to improve parents' skills in supporting student success. Parents will be engaged in only those sessions that fit their needs, as determined in the Family Check-Up. Sessions involve skills specific to parents' positive behavior support, setting healthy limits, and learning specific strategies for family relationship building.

The PFS model uses a proactive approach to addressing student behavior and engaging parents in supporting student success.

To set the foundation for parent engagement, parents complete the brief Student Readiness Assessment, a systematic and respectful approach to considering parents' views of their middle school student's strengths and needs.

Students who meet expectations may not require much additional guidance or parent engagement. Students who are having difficulty with the behaviors critical to school success will be identified by teachers and will receive additional monitoring and support to improve

their behavior. Parents will be invited into a partnership to support their student by increased monitoring and positive behavior support. If this level of support is not successful, more individualized support interventions in the school will be designed (Figure 3).

TRAINING

To implement PFS, the Child and Family Center's professional family intervention staff will provide in-service workshops for the general school staff and the school leadership. Training workshops will be financially supported by the project. Child and Family

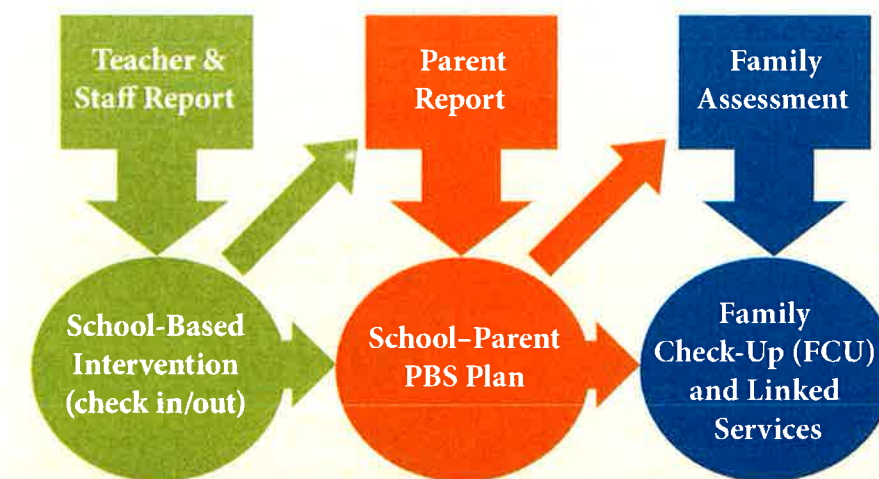


FIGURE 3. Framework for Initiating Positive Family Support into School Responses