



Increasing Access to Prevention Services through a Coordinated Referral Network

Southeast Kansas IRIS Network

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EVENT

Date

May 27 – May 30, 2025

Event

[Society for Prevention Research Conference](#)

University of Kansas Center for Public Partnerships and Research (KU-CPPR) staff Priya Vanchy Kadavasal, PhD, MPH, Associate Researcher, and Euijin Jung, PhD, MSW, Associate Researcher, presented data on the Southeast Kansas IRIS Network at the Society for Prevention Research. This internationally recognized conference, which aims to explore prevention strategies through the scientific method, was held from May 27 to May 30, 2025.

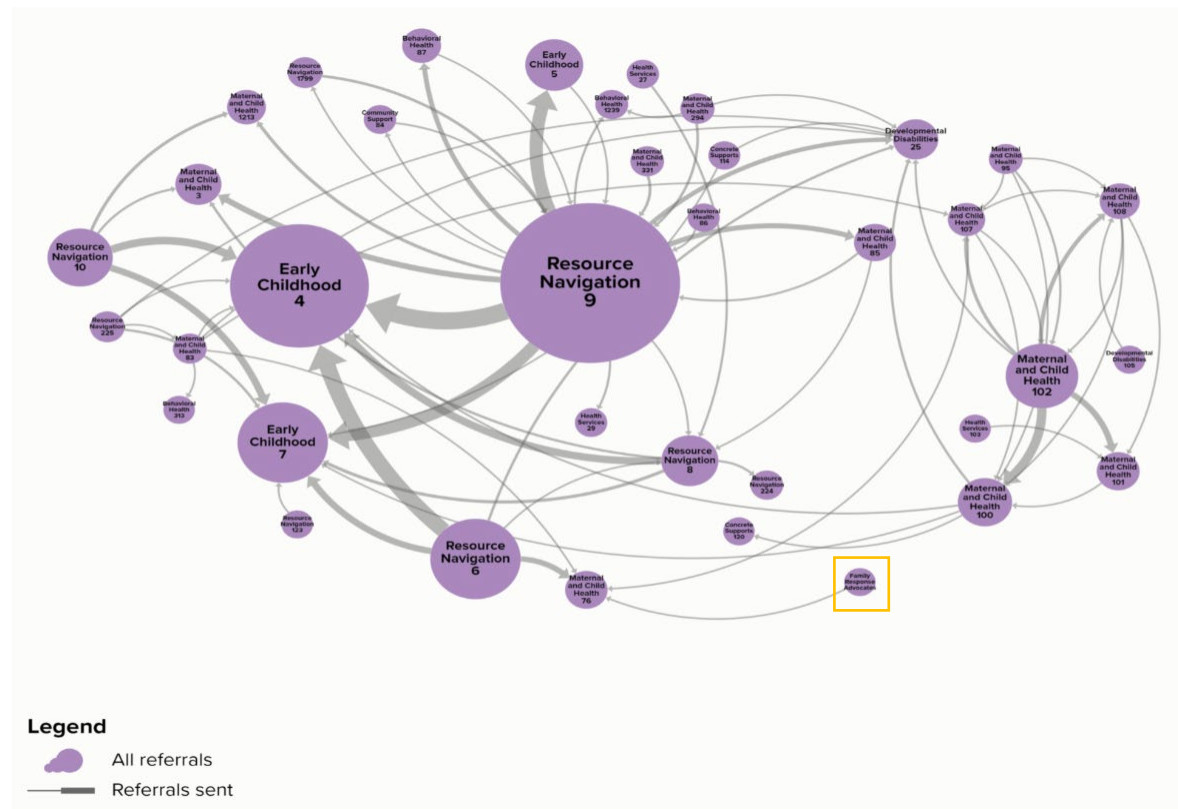
In their presentation *Increasing Access to Prevention Services through a Coordinated Referral Network: Cross Sector Impact*, the researchers shared key findings from the Family Strong Project, a federally funded program that aims to promote primary prevention of child welfare involvement in Southeast Kansas (Allen, Bourbon, Cherokee, Crawford, Labette, Montgomery, Neosho, and Wilson counties). One of the goals of Family Strong is to increase coordination across service organizations and strengthen the existing family support network in the region to facilitate service delivery and referral navigation.

The researchers at KU-CPPR sought to answer two questions. First, they investigated how the Southeast Kansas IRIS Network was affected by intentional Family Strong outreach strategies, which included the establishment of a Community Outreach Liaison who conducted systematic outreach to strengthen the provider network. Second, they explored the impact of expanding the capacity and geographic

reach of the Family Response Advocate (FRA), which provides comprehensive case management and serves as a connection hub between providers.

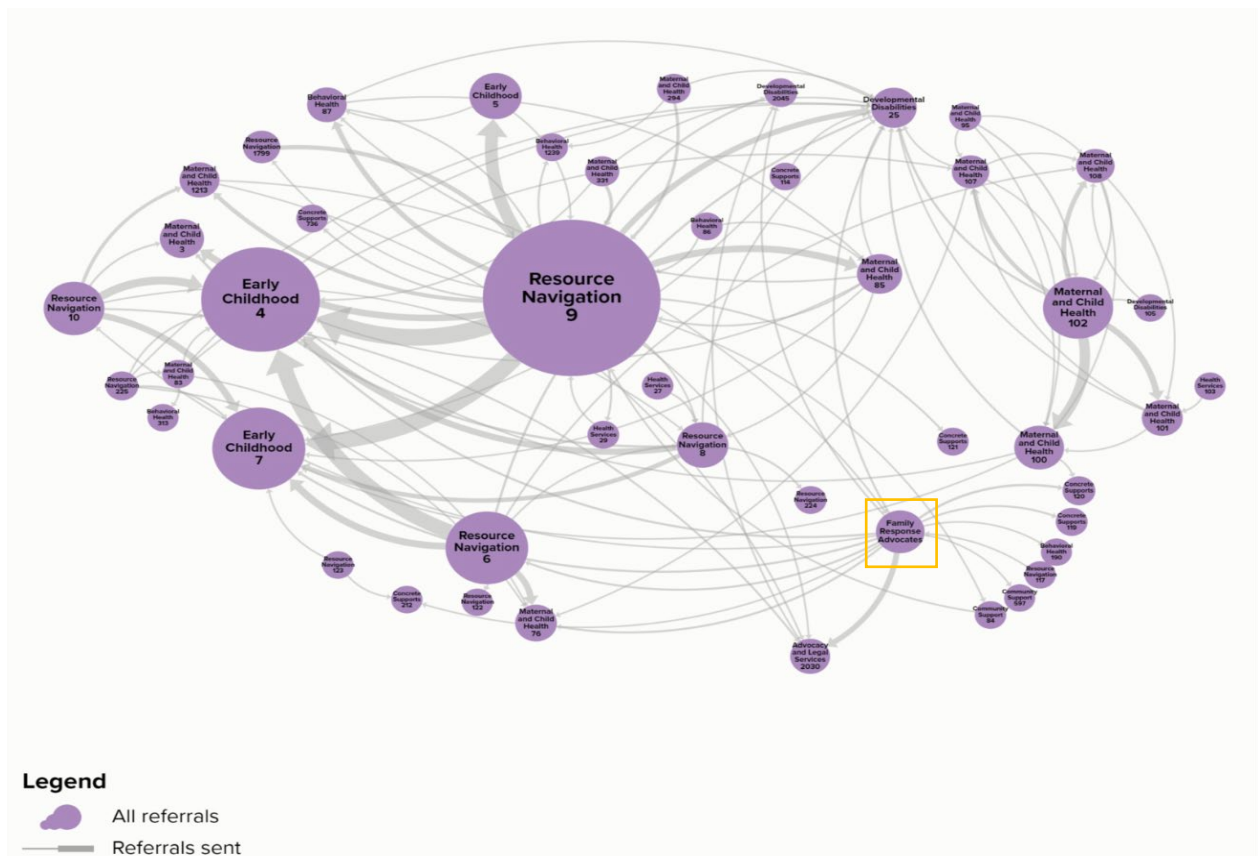
RESULTS

Using Social Network Analysis to understand patterns of relationships between interconnected entities, the researchers' findings revealed an increase in the uptake and use of IRIS during the study period (October 2021 - December 2023), characterized by a rise in the total number of organizations actively referring to one another and the growing volume of referrals. In the first year of data collection, when the FRA was initially integrated into the existing network (see Fig.1), referral pathways began to form between existing organizations and the FRA (see orange box in Fig.1 and Fig. 2).



First year of FRA organization in IRIS [10.1.21 – 9.30.22]

Over time, as the FRA expanded its reach to assist more families in the community, the referral network grew to include additional service providers. These organizations became increasingly interconnected, and the FRA emerged as a new influential network partner by streamlining existing referral pathways between providers and making new referrals for families (see Fig. 2).



Through the second year of FRA organization in IRIS [10.1.21 – 9.30.23]

The increase in referral activity may be attributed in part to Family Strong's outreach strategies, which aim to support provider capacity, enhance communication, and create more connection points among referral partners. The FRA plays a significant role in increasing these connections, leading to greater network cohesiveness and enabling providers to access relevant referral information and communicate more effectively.

Due to these focused engagement strategies and the expansion of the FRA, the Southeast IRIS Network has referred 2,579 families during the study period, indicating that referral partners are collaborating more effectively and creating stronger partnerships that enhance service delivery. The results of this analysis suggest that integrating technical referral platforms, such as IRIS, alongside system-wide prevention efforts, can strengthen existing partnerships and positively impact community well-being.