

# Evaluation Snapshots

Research summaries at a glance  
Vol.1, No.1



Welcome to *Evaluation Snapshots*, our first edition in a series of research summaries at a glance.

For detailed research reports, visit the publications section of our Web site.

Family Connection began as a Georgia initiative in 1991 with the formation of 15 community collaboratives.

Today, Family Connection has 159 county collaboratives that work with more than 3,000 partners to improve the well-being of children, families and communities in Georgia.

## Effects of Community Collaboration on Teen Pregnancy and High School Completion

Compiled from research by *The Theory of Change* workgroup

Does community collaboration bring results? That's the million-dollar question that partners, legislators, and funders ask when they consider supporting Family Connection, a statewide initiative of 159 county collaboratives that works to improve the well-being of children, families, and communities in Georgia.

Family Connection Partnership is conducting research to examine changes in Georgia KIDS COUNT indicators associated with the formation with Family Connection collaborations. This edition of *Evaluation Snapshots* reports key findings from the first phase of the study, which examined teen pregnancy and high school completion, two indicators targeted by a large number of Family Connection collaboratives.

### Background

#### What is a collaborative?

Georgia Family Connection collaboratives are comprised of community partners that include families, local business and civic leaders, local elected officials, faith-based and school-based organizations, and public and private human service providers. Each collaborative coordinates a planning process that identifies community needs and resources, sets goals and priorities, evaluates strategies and practices, and measures and reports results for its county. Since the make-up of each collaborative and its goals are unique to the community, evaluating the impact of the statewide initiative presents challenges.

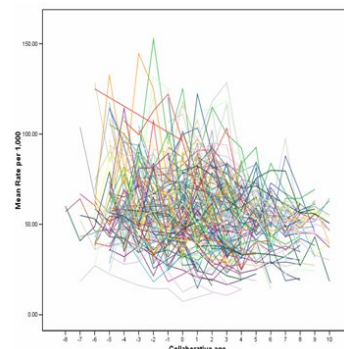
#### How do we track our progress?

That's where Georgia KIDS COUNT is helpful. KIDS COUNT is a state and national effort funded by the Annie E. Casey Foundation to track the status of children. It tracks a multitude of indicators, which Georgia reports in five result areas—Healthy Children, Children Ready to Start School, Children Succeeding in School, Stable Self-Sufficient Families, and Strong Communities. Family Connection collaboratives choose indicators to target based on their community's needs, then report the results of those indicators via their annual plans, which feed the Collaborative Information Management System.

#### Why evaluate our work?

Family Connection Partnership, the supporting state intermediary for Family Connection, evaluates Georgia KIDS COUNT data so partners, legislators, and supporters can make informed decisions.

In this study, we began with the raw data, which resembled an abstract painting, and ended with a clearer picture that showed a decline in teen pregnancy and an increase in high school completion after the formation of Georgia Family Connection collaboratives and community efforts to improve results.



## Key Findings

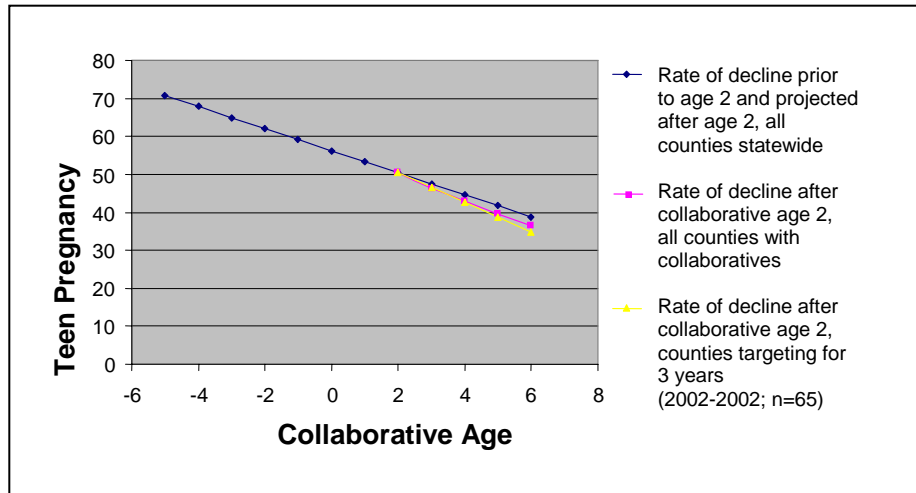
### Research Method

Latent Growth Curve Modeling was used to analyze:

- 1) the change over time in indicators from the years 1994–2003,
- 2) between the years of collaborative formation, and
- 3) after the years of collaborative formation.

### Teen Pregnancy

While teen pregnancy rates declined for the average county prior to collaborative formation, they declined significantly faster in counties two years after collaboration formation, and even faster in counties with collaboratives that targeted the indicator for multiple years.

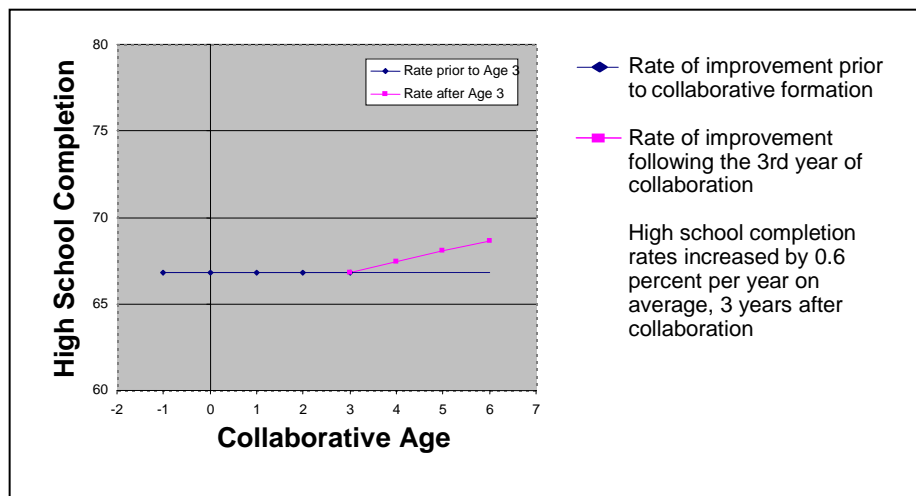


This edition of *Evaluation Snapshots* is based on reports from the Family Connection Partnership *Theory of Change* Workgroup:

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- Rebekah Hudgins
- Valerie Hutchetson
- Metis Associates
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### High School Completion

While high school completion rates were level for the average county prior to collaborative formation, they increased significantly, on average by 0.6 percent per year, following the third year of collaboration.



## Results of Community Collaboration

Both indicators showed marked improvement after the formation of Family Connection collaboratives. Further improvements were seen in collaboratives that targeted teen pregnancy for multiple years. If you want to get involved in your local community to address issues like teen pregnancy or high school completion rates, consider supporting your local Family Connection collaborative. To contact your local collaborative, see: [www.gafcp.org](http://www.gafcp.org).