

*First Children  
Services LLC*

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# **2019 Customer Satisfaction Survey External Report**

May 2019



First Children Services – 2019 Customer Satisfaction Survey - External Report

This report is intended for public release to customers and other organizational stakeholders. For more information or additional copies of this report, please contact:

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First Children Services offers sincere thanks and gratitude to its customers who took the time to respond to this customer satisfaction survey.

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## I. About First Children Services

First Children Services is a combination of three organizations: First Children, LLC; First Children Learning Services, LLC; Regional Enrichment and Learning Center, LLC. Born out of a common mission to achieve ***Life Changing Outcomes for Exceptional Kids*** the three companies provide a wide range of home, school and clinic based services to children and their families throughout New Jersey. The company has recently opened a new office in Montgomery County, PA, with a Strive Autism Center.

On any given day First Children Services touches the lives of more than 1,000 children and families with a dedicated workforce of nearly 300 teachers, therapists, paraprofessionals and support staff. The organization works with over 70 school districts in NJ; is approved by the NJ Department of Children and Families to provide behavior therapy and support services; and is in network with several major insurance companies.

Additional current information about First Children Services can be found online at the web site (<http://firstchildrenservices.com/>).

## II. Customers as Stakeholders

First Children provides care and services to children, who are the recipients of beneficial services. Therefore, in identifying who are its customers, First Children Services recognized there are groups of persons with a personal or a business relationship interest, or “stake”, in the processes and outcomes of services provided to the children who are entrusted to their care. These “stakeholders” include both the families of the children who receive the care, and also the organizations representing some of these families and the children, such as school districts, who enter into business arrangements with First Children to provide services. For this survey, these customer-stakeholder groups were identified and clustered into 10 groups, with all located in the State of New Jersey:

- Twilight STARZ Families
- School Case Managers
- Insurance Applied Behavior Analysis Families
- Transitions Families
- Case Management Organizations
- First Children School Families
- Child Care Families
- Transitions Case Managers
- Private Insurance Companies
- School Districts

The number of persons in each customer-stakeholder group varied, and the total reachable population was 539 persons (451 in 2018).

### **III. Description of Customer Satisfaction Survey, 2019**

The Customer Satisfaction Survey began in 2018, when the CEO of First Children Services initiated the organization's first customer satisfaction survey to gather feedback from customer-stakeholders. The intent of this survey was to understand customer opinions regarding the services provided by First Children Services, identify where and how these customers think the organization could improve its operations, take action on these findings, and use this data collection to establish an initial benchmark against which improvements could in turn be measured in future customer satisfaction surveys. The 2018 survey was initiated in March, and concluded in April 2018. The 2019 survey used the same questions as the 2018 survey, and was launched in April, and concluded in May 2019. This external report is a summary of findings, while a separate, more detailed internal report has been prepared to provide deeper insight to drive actionable interpretations.

### **IV. Methodology**

Using the services of an external consultant experienced in survey design, data collection, and data analysis, the survey project team developed the survey questions, with both open ended and selectable responses for closed-ended questions. The survey included a total of 13 questions, with seven closed-ended multiple-choice questions (Likert scale) and six questions with open-ended response. There were four principal evaluation questions in the survey, relating to (1) service quality of child services provided, (2) satisfaction with outcomes of child services provided, (3) compassion of First Children employees, and (4) responsiveness of the First Children organization to questions or needs. The survey was pilot tested prior to official launch to test the goal of requiring not more than 10 minutes to complete the survey. Since some First Children customers do not use English as their primary language, the survey questions were also translated into the Spanish language. In 2019, 98% of responses were provided in English (135 persons), and 2% were provided in Spanish (3 persons, an increase from 1 person in 2018). In 2018, the survey was also translated into French Creole, but since there were no respondents to this language in 2018, it was discontinued in 2019.

In order to use an electronic survey data collection platform, First Children Services utilized existing customer contact information to identify an email address for each customer-stakeholder, with 552 individual customer-stakeholders identified. Their contact information was held as private information, and the survey was designed and data collection management organized to treat all responses as anonymous. Thirteen (13) of the respondent emails were returned undelivered, therefore, the reachable population of the survey was 539 persons.

In mid-April 2019, the survey was released to the individual customer-stakeholders via an

email issued through a secured online survey management tool, with the email message originating from the First Children Services CEO. Respondents were informed regarding the preserved full anonymity of their responses. Four reminders were sent at approximately one week intervals, and only to persons who had not yet responded to prior requests. After four weeks of data collection, in late May 2019 the survey web site was closed. Responses were received from 138 persons (122 in 2018), a very respectable response rate of 26% (27% in 2018). The total number of persons contacted in 2019 (539) represented an increase of 19% from those contacted in 2018 (451). The total number of responses received in 2019 (138) represented an increase of 13% from that received in 2018 (122).

## V. Findings/Results

### Findings from Multiple-Choice Questions

This 2019 survey was the second such survey conducted by First Children, and now affords a retrospective comparative analysis. The 2019 survey results reflect a high degree of satisfaction with First Children Services as measured in five areas: net promoter score (e.g. would you recommend to others?), and the four principal evaluation questions regarding quality of services, outcomes of services, compassion of employees, and responsiveness (turnaround time) of the organization. The findings for each of these are summarized as follows:

- The Net Promoter Score (NPS) for 2019, taken from “would you recommend [First Children] to others?” was 92% (an increase from 86% in 2018). This is a very high figure, as most industries average from 20-50% NPS.
- More than 86% of respondents said they would rate the quality of services provided by First Children as “Superior” or “Very Satisfactory”, each being on a higher scale above average (an increase from 80% in 2018).
- 95% of respondents with an opinion said they either “Strongly Agree” or “Somewhat Agree” on being satisfied with the outcomes of services provided by First Children (a decrease from 97% in 2018).
- More than 98% of respondents with an opinion said they either “Strongly Agree” or “Somewhat Agree” that First Children employees are compassionate (nearly identical to 2018).
- 96% of respondents with an opinion said that First Children was either “Very Responsive” (usually responding in a day or so) or “Responsive” (usually responding in a few days) to their questions or needs (an increase from nearly 90% in 2018).

### Open Ended Question Findings

All respondents had the chance to answer the six open-ended questions, including an open-ended response for each of the four principal evaluation questions relating to service quality,

satisfaction with child outcomes, compassion of employees, responsiveness of the organization. For the four principal evaluation questions, a total of 114 comments and suggestions were received (98 in 2018). Each comment was coded as being positive (83%), neutral (4%), or needs improvement (13%). The major themes and trends of these comments are below.

## Positive Comments

A total of 95 positive comments were received (69 in 2018), comprising more than 83% of the total comments (70% in 2018). The change in the percentage of positive responses represents an increasing and desirable trend from 2018.

Based on word frequency analysis, some themes emerging from these positive comments included phrases using the words great (9x), love (6x), progress (5x), amazing (5x), like (5x), and excellent (3x).

### Positive Comments

*"Although there is always room for improvement, I feel First Children School doesn't need to change a thing!! They are awesome!"*

*"I couldn't ask for any better. This school is a God send!"*

*"My son has an amazing time on a daily basis, loves to do his homework and learns new things every day."*

*"All staff members display strong dedication in the services they provide to students."*

*"The difference in my child school grades is phenomenal, in less than 4 months."*

## Needs Improvement Comments

### Needs Improvement Comments

*"I would have liked to see more academics infused into the student's program."*

*"Additional and ongoing training needed for teachers to better understand the particular needs of various diagnoses."*

*"Some better communication when someone is absent would be helpful."*

15 comments were received that reflected a needs improvement opportunity (18 in 2018), and comprised some 13% of the open-ended responses (18% in 2018). The decreased percentage of needs improvement responses

represents a desirable trend from 2018.

The most frequent comments reflect an opportunity for First Children to improve classroom functions and operations.

## Suggestions for Improvement

Additionally, respondents were asked a concluding

### Suggestions

*"I wish there were more weekend times available, so I can get more therapy in."*

*"Better options for trips"*

*"More weekend times available."*

*"Improve documentation provided for IEP meetings (written summary of performance, educational Goals and Objectives."*

*"Communication with the parents has room for improvement, it would be good to know what the children did every day. The current platform for communication is a white board next to the class room that is not always updated."*

question, “How can First Children improve its services to you in the future?” which elicited an additional 31 responses and suggestions (20 in 2018). These suggestions should be captured for action by First Children.

A diverse set of ideas and suggestions emerged, including available days and times, and especially communications methods and approaches.

## **VI. Discussion and Recommendations**

The findings of this survey show that more than 86% of respondents rate the quality of services received from First Children as above average (an increase from 80% in 2018), giving a rating of either Superior or Very Satisfactory. This is very positive, represents an increasing trend from the prior year, and yet still offers opportunity and room for improvement.

The 2019 Net Promoter Score (NPS) of 92%, taken from “would you recommend [First Children] to others?” (an increase from 86% in 2018) is extremely positive, and is a very high rating from among all US industries. Consistently maintaining an NPS score above 85% for several years would be an outstanding accomplishment.

The detailed customer comments and suggestions offer useful findings. Based on the respondents’ comments and opinions, a separate detailed report and analysis identifies some specific topics and common themes that can be used to inform a continuous quality improvement process.

## **VII. Strengths and Limitations of this 2019 Survey**

### **Strengths**

This is the second large-scale Customer Satisfaction survey sponsored by First Children Services using customer service principles and strategies to gather feedback from families and other stakeholders. Continuation of the survey on an annual basis reaffirms the commitment of First Children to the opinions, wants, and needs of its customers.

A steady response rate over the first two survey years (27% in 2018, and 26% in 2019 which included a 19% increase in the number of customers contacted) represents a demonstrable caring commitment by customers of First Children for their interest in First Children’s role in the lives of their children.

From among the 136 respondents, more than 145 comments to open-ended questions were received (a 48% increase from 2018). Quantitatively, this volume of input represents a significant commitment of time and effort by the customers of First

Children to provide actionable inputs. Based on qualitative methodologies, this is a large, rich, and detailed data set from which First Children can draw upon to improve its operations and maintain or improve customer satisfaction levels.

Using qualitative research methods to code and analyze the responses to the open-ended questions, the separate detailed analysis and report can be used to identify trends that will inform self-evaluation and other improvements in the way First Children delivers services.

## Limitations

The question set, and the way questions were posed, were subject to the perspectives and biases of the survey developers, and they may not represent the questions to which customers would prefer to respond. An analysis of the responses from 2018 and 2019 may influence future year questions.

The survey response rate of 26%, while yielding a significant quantity of responses (136) still represents a minority of the customer-stakeholder population, and may not be fully representative of the population, and thus may have a higher margin of error. Increasing voluntary response rates in the future may require additional and more frequent communications to the customer-stakeholder population.

The use of an online survey with response requests sent through email may have resulted in some of the request email messages routed to spam instead of reaching the customer-stakeholders. This may have adversely impacted the response rate. In the future, as generational practices for digital communication shifts from email to hand-held devices (e.g. smart phones), First Children may want to offer text messaging as a survey communications channel option.

As with any voluntary survey, selection bias is inherent regarding whether or not to respond. Typically, people who feel strongly positive or strongly negative are more likely to complete the survey.

## VIII. Next Steps

First Children Services should use the findings from this survey to plan and implement actions based on the survey responses, and the suggestions and requests received. First Children Services should also conduct another Customer Satisfaction survey in 2020 to continue to compare against prior year findings, which will allow First Children to evaluate trends, and take actions based on comparative findings.