

Protective Factors Surveys

What are the Protective Factors Surveys?

The Protective Factors Survey (PFS) and the Protective Factors Survey, 2nd Edition (PFS-2) are designed for use with parents and caregivers participating in family support and child maltreatment prevention services. The PFS and PFS-2 assess multiple protective factors to prevent child abuse and neglect. Both surveys are intended to help agencies and programs better assess changes in family protective factors – a primary focus of prevention work. To view the tools, see the PFS or PFS-2 tabs below.

The survey results are designed to:



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changes in family protective factors, and
3) help identify areas where staff can focus on increasing protective factors for each family.

Why was the original Protective Factors Survey (PFS) revised?



Which version is best for my needs?



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What is the Protective Factors Survey (PFS)?

The PFS is a pre-post evaluation tool for use with caregivers receiving child maltreatment prevention services. It is a self-administered survey that measures protective factors in five areas: family functioning/resiliency, social support, concrete support, nurturing and attachment, and knowledge of parenting/child development. A one-page overview of the tool can be viewed [here](#).

Is the PFS the right tool for you?

As you make decisions about whether the PFS is the right tool for your program, please refer to our [PFS Checklist](#).

If you find that the PFS is not the right fit for your services, you may want to review [FRIENDS' annotated compendium of evaluation tools](#) as a resource.

How was the PFS developed?

The PFS is a product of the FRIENDS National Center in collaboration with the University of Kansas Institute for Educational Research and Public Service. It was developed with the advice and assistance from CBCAP grantees, parents, researchers, administrators, workers, and experts specializing in family support, child maltreatment, and psychological measurement. The survey has undergone four national field tests for establishing reliability and validity. To view materials from that testing, see the Field Test Report and Phase 4 Summary documents on the left.

Is the PFS an evidence-based measurement tool?

Yes, the California Clearinghouse on Evidence-Based Practices (<http://www.cebc4cw.org>) has included the PFS as an evidence-based tool in their listings.

How is the PFS used?

The primary purpose of the Protective Factors Survey is to provide feedback to agencies for continuous quality improvement and evaluation purposes. The survey results are designed to help agencies measure changes in protective factors and identify areas where workers can focus on increasing individual family protective factors. A full set of instructions on how to administer the PFS can be found by downloading the [PFS User Manual](#).

Why are the demographics and program information questions different on some versions of the PFS?

The demographics and program information questions were updated in September of 2020 to align the information across all versions of the PFS and PFS-2, allowing for streamlined data collection efforts by organizations utilizing multiple versions of the survey. These changes did not impact the validity or reliability of the overall surveys. To see a comprehensive matrix of the changes you can [download the chart here](#). You can download the archived versions by clicking the titles here – [2008 PFS](#) – [2008 Retrospective PFS](#) – [2008 S-PFS](#)

Is there an online data system for survey administration and data collection of the Protective Factors Survey?

The [Protective Factors Survey Online Data System](#) (PFSODS) is a web-based tool that allows users access to an online data system. This system enables users to manage all aspects of the original Protective Factors Survey (PFS) and the Protective Factors Survey, 2nd Edition (PFS-2). This system allows users to locally own their data while having access to a state-of-the-art online data collection system.

This system is designed to allow for a digital administration of the survey via direct interaction with clients or a text, email link, or QR code for completion at a separate time. The system is responsive and can be administered on a phone, tablet, laptop, or desktop environment. These options allow for direct entry by clients into the system, eliminating potentially time-consuming data entry. If you don't have digital access for client administration- don't worry! You can still use this system. You can administer traditional paper/pencil surveys and use the system for data entry via the paper entry format.

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