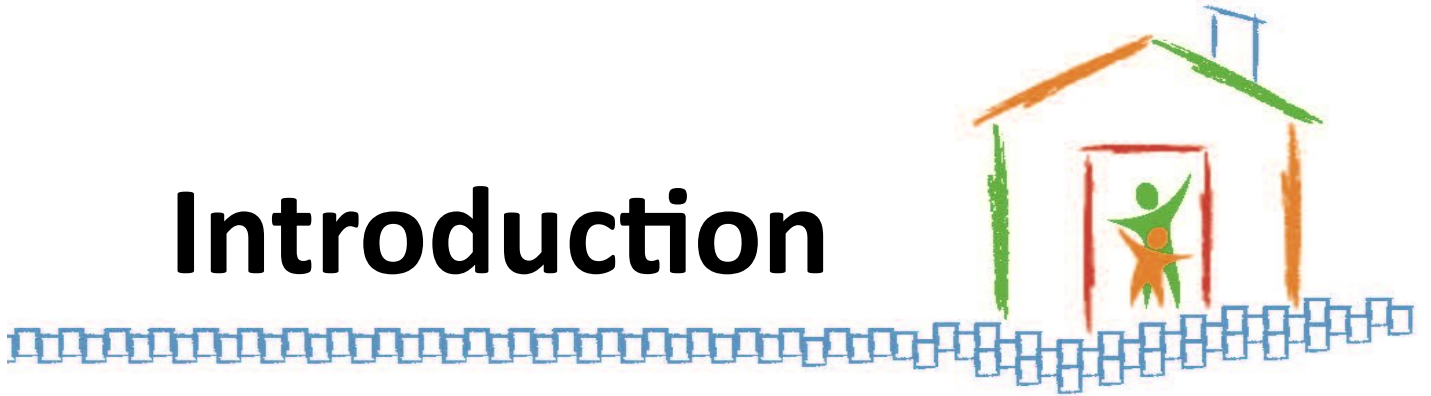


# Introduction



# Strong Parents, Stable Children: *Building Protective Factors to Strengthen Families*



## Ideas and Insights for Improvement – It all begins with “I”

Things **I** am doing well...

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New ideas and things **I** will try doing more of...

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Things **I** will do less of...

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# Strong Parents, Stable Children: *Building Protective Factors to Strengthen Families*



## Ideas and Insights for Improvement – It all begins with “I”

Things **I** am doing well...

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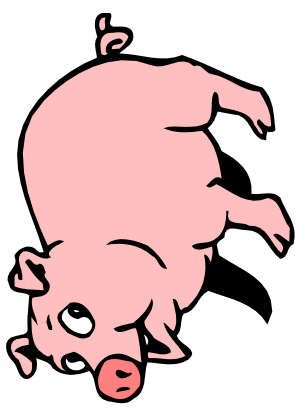
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# P.I.G.S.



## Principles for Effective Teaching

Presenter  <u>P</u> resent content, principles, and information	Learner  <u>G</u> ive learners an opportunity to explain the principle in their own words
Presenter  <u>I</u> nstance – give an example/instance/story that supports and illustrates the principle	Learner  <u>S</u> hare – learners share their own experiences and examples that relate to the principles they learned

(Adapted from David Merrill, 1994, p. 121)

## Why Are We Here?



### To protect and strengthen families!

~ Children need safe and stable homes ~



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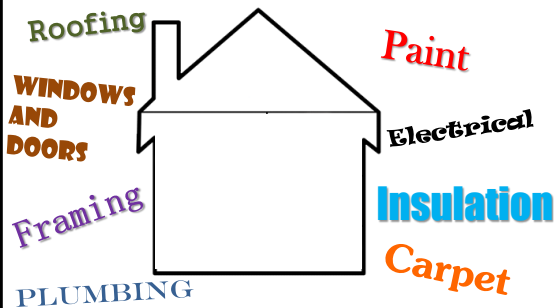
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## Strong Parents, Stable Children



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## It Takes a Village...



- ☐ Parents and children do best when they are surrounded by caring people who can help.
  - ☐ Other parents/friends
  - ☐ Educators/child services
  - ☐ Clergy/fait-h-based leaders
  - ☐ Business professionals
  - ☐ Health care professionals



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## Four Assumptions

1. Most parents love their children and want a strong and healthy relationship with them.

"No parent wakes up in the morning planning to make a child's life miserable. No mother or father says, 'Today I'll yell, nag, and humiliate my child whenever possible.' On the contrary, in the morning many parents resolve, 'This is going to be a peaceful day. No yelling, no arguing, and no fighting.' Yet, in spite of good intentions, the unwanted war breaks out again. Once again we find ourselves saying things we do not mean, in a tone we do not like."

(Haim Ginott, *Between Parent and Child*)

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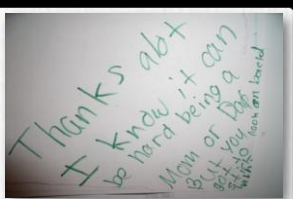
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## Four Assumptions

2. Parenting is not easy. All of us fall short when it comes to being a perfect parent. We all need compassion and forgiveness – and so do children.

We "got" to stick with it!



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## Four Assumptions

3. Children do best when their parents have healthy relationships with their partner/previous partner – this includes co-parents, stepparents, foster parents, grandparents, etc.

**Healthy couple relationships *spill over* into healthy parent-child relationships**



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## Four Assumptions



4. We are here because we love children and we are parents and caregivers or work with parents and families to promote positive family and child well-being. We make informed decisions that are in families' best interests. We want to be better at what we do.



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## Project Background



**Children's  
Trust Fund**

Missouri's Foundation For Child Abuse Prevention



**PROJECT  
LAUNCH**

UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI  
**U Extension**

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## Project Background



- The purpose of the Strengthening Families framework:
  - Increase family strengths
  - Enhance child development
  - Reduce child abuse and neglect

CENTER FOR THE STUDY  
OF SOCIAL POLICY'S

**strengthening families™**  
A PROTECTIVE FACTORS FRAMEWORK

Center for the Study of Social Policy (CSSP):

<http://www.cssp.org/reform/strengthening-families/the-basics/protective-factors>

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Objectives –  
Is the purpose today to...



Turn you into Parenting Ninjas!?



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Objectives –  
“Prevention by Promotion”



- Describe the five protective factors that help strengthen families and reduce the likelihood of abuse and neglect.
- Understand how the five protective factors relate to child and family well-being.
- Recognize how you as a parent, caregiver, or service provider (and your organization) already support the development of protective factors.
- Commit to learning new strategies that support your efforts to help your family or families you serve.
- Identify and implement program strategies and resources to help parents and families have a healthy future together.

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P.I.G.S.

- P**resent – Content, principles, information, tools.
- I**nstance – Give an instance/example/story that supports the principle (or a non-example when it did not work) to illustrate the principle.
- G**ive – Give parents an opportunity to explain the principle in their own words.
- S**hare – Parents share their own experiences and examples that relate to the principle or information that was just learned.



Based on Component Display Theory by David Merrill (2001)

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## Binder Review – What's in this thing?



- Wheel
- Powerpoint slides
- Summary guidesheets of the 5 protective factors for different audiences
- Tools and guidesheets
- Additional resources
- Ideas and insights for improvement sheet

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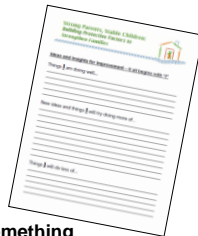
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## Ideas and Insights for Improvement



Research shows we remember approximately:

- 10% of what you read
- 20% of what you hear
- 30% of what you see
- 50% of what you hear & see together
- 70% of what you say
- 90% of what you do



People are 42% more likely to **do** something when they write it down. Jot it down, then **DO** it!

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## What are Protective Factors?



- Conditions and attributes that keep all families strong and help reduce or eliminate risk.
- Protective factors can be improved and strengthened so parents can be at their best!



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## What are *Promotive* Factors?



- Intentional activities that promote and actively improve well-being.
- Protective and Promotive factors increase the probability of positive, resilient, and healthy outcomes, even in the face of risk and adversity.




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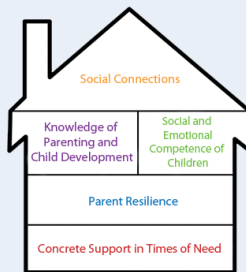
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## The Five Protective Factors



- Concrete Support in Times of Need
- Parent Resilience
- Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development
- Social and Emotional Competence of Children
- Social Connections



**These are important for the healthy development of *ALL* families!**

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# Strong Parents, Stable Children: Building Protective Factors to Strengthen Families



## Business Sector

### What Are Protective Factors?

When children are raised in loving and caring environments, they are more prepared for the future. Every family experiences challenges and stress from time to time, so all parents need help to raise children to their fullest potential and reduce the likelihood of child maltreatment.

Even when different families face similar struggles, some cope better than others. There are many reasons why families handle stress differently, but one has to do with protective factors. Protective factors are characteristics that promote optimal development by helping families succeed and thrive, even in the face of risks and challenges.

Following are five protective factors that, when present, increase the overall well-being of children and families:

#### Concrete Support in Times of Need

*Families need support and services that address their needs and help minimize stress caused by challenges.*

#### Parental Resilience

*Ability of parents to be strong and flexible when encountering difficulties, adversity, and trauma.*

#### Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development

*Parents need information and strategies to support physical, cognitive, language, social, and emotional development.*

#### Children's Social and Emotional Competence

*Children need help expressing their feelings and emotions. Parents can help children learn to communicate clearly, recognize and regulate emotions, and build and maintain relationships.*

#### Social Connections

*Families need to build and maintain positive relationships that can provide emotional, instrumental, informational, spiritual, and other helpful support.*

Given their visibility and ability to circulate information, businesses are in a prime position to promote family strengths. Why should businesses promote family well-being? Family issues impact businesses every day. Absenteeism is an issue, but so is "presenteeism." This is when workers show up, but they are not mentally and emotionally present. Presenteeism actually contributes much more to lost productivity than absenteeism.

When businesses support families, it sends a strong message to consumers. Businesses can help address families' needs by connecting them with concrete supports that strengthen families. In turn, helping families build protective factors helps businesses develop and retain a workforce.

Is there a community-based partnership between business leaders in your area? This partnership could provide opportunities for businesses to share how they promote protective factors, both in the business and in the community. The key is not just identifying ways to help, but rather a sustained commitment to working to strengthen families.

Changes in the economy, higher workload demands, and work-family balance challenges have led to increased worker stress. Stress tends to be especially high in hospitality, retail, and other lower-wage business sectors. These employees often have high stress due to financial struggles, irregular hours, housing issues, and physical demands, which impacts all family members. Employers need to show that they support families at all times, but it is especially important to send a clear message that they support employees during crises.

On the other side of this factsheet is a list of ways businesses can help strengthen families' protective factors. Although some suggestions may be better suited to larger businesses, all organizations can identify strategies to help them contribute to strengthening families.

## **What Can Business Do to Support and Strengthen Families?**

*Businesses and employers may have an influence on several protective factors, but the biggest influence may be on Social Connections and Concrete Support in Times of Need.*

### **Concrete Support in Times of Need**

- Offer employees access to community and Cooperative Extension resources in the workplace ([www.extension.org](http://www.extension.org)):
- Printed materials: Kiosks or bulletin boards with up-to-date information about local programs and activities
- Lunch and learn: Invite local groups to give talks about their programs and services
- Provide on-site or refer employees to learning opportunities on child development, parent education, healthy couple relationships, stress reduction, continuing education, and others that can support families. This information needs to be relevant to diverse family types including single parents, grandparents, foster/adoptive parents, and gay/lesbian couples.
- Be supportive of parenting and family needs (e.g., flexible scheduling or telecommuting, on-site child care, lactation room, family resource area, referral services). Invite trainers and/or consultants to visit the business and identify ways it can be more family-friendly.
- Ensure employees are aware of and know how to access outside resources and supports during emergencies (e.g. respite care, mental health, domestic violence, substance abuse, legal assistance, emergency crisis services).
- Offer on-site or recommend nearby opportunities to help employees relieve stress, such as a gym, exercise or yoga classes, and/or wellness programs.
- Provide printed materials and/or presentations about business, state, and national policies that impact employees and their families.
- Ensure appropriate staff are trained in a broad range of issues that impact families, including mental health, substance abuse, domestic violence (as perpetrator or victim), conflict management, recognizing and responding to signs of distress, and looking for signs of child abuse and neglect. If applicable, make employees aware of their responsibilities as mandated reporters.

### **Social Connections**

- Provide resources and opportunities for families to get together and engage in special activities and events (e.g., picnics, learning opportunities, family movie night).
- Distribute information about local family, educational, social, and volunteer activities and events.
- Create spaces that help promote social connections where employees can meet informally.
- Provide opportunities for employees to socialize and foster a sense of community – those with similar interests or similar life circumstances.
- Create a sense of belonging by recognizing employees for their contributions, years of service, and other achievements.
- Distribute information so employees know which departments/units/staff to turn to for help with various matters.
- Build relationships and sponsor local programs that support children, youth, and families. Encourage employees to become involved through volunteer opportunities.

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# Strong Parents, Stable Children: Building Protective Factors to Strengthen Families



## Educators

### What Are Protective Factors?

When children are raised in loving and caring environments, they are more prepared for the future. Every family experiences challenges and stress from time to time, so all parents need help to raise children to their fullest potential and reduce the likelihood of child maltreatment.

Even when different families face similar struggles, some cope better than others. There are many reasons why families handle stress differently, but one has to do with protective factors. Protective factors are characteristics that promote optimal development by helping families succeed and thrive, even in the face of risks and challenges.

Following are five protective factors that, when present, increase the overall well-being of children and families:

#### Concrete Support in Times of Need

*Families need support and services that address their needs and help minimize stress caused by challenges.*

#### Parental Resilience

*Ability of parents to be strong and flexible when encountering difficulties, adversity, and trauma.*

#### Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development

*Parents need information and strategies to support physical, cognitive, language, social, and emotional development.*

#### Children's Social and Emotional Competence

*Children need help expressing their feelings and emotions. Parents can help children learn to communicate clearly, recognize and regulate emotions, and build and maintain relationships.*

#### Social Connections

*Families need to build and maintain positive relationships that can provide emotional, instrumental, informational, spiritual, and other helpful support.*

Children's well-being is directly tied to family well-being. Stress in the home spills over into children's ability to concentrate and behave well in school. When stress is repeated and severe, it can have long-term negative consequences for children's development. It may impact their physical health, as well as their ability to build protective factors over time. Given their daily interaction with children and families, educators are in a unique position to notice changes in children's behaviors that may suggest unhealthy stress in the home.

Educators should believe that every parent wants the best for their children, but even great parents need help sometimes. If educators convey this message in their interaction and communication with parents, they can help parents feel valued and supported. This helps build rapport and make parents more likely to trust and look to their children's teachers when they need help.

Be proactive when you think family issues might be interfering with children's behavior and success. As mandated reporters, educators are required to intervene when child abuse and neglect are suspected; however, taking a preventive approach and continuously looking for signs of possible struggles may help prevent maltreatment.

For many parents, their interaction with child care providers is very brief, but the fact that it occurs every day means child care providers can build strong relationships with families over time. Elementary school teachers are less likely to have daily interaction with parents, but they can still maintain contact using daily or weekly reports by email or folders.

On the other side of this factsheet is a list of the many ways educators play a role in supporting and strengthening protective factors in children, families, and communities.

## **What Can Educators Do to Support and Strengthen Families?**

*Educators' unique relationship with children and families means they could have some influence on all five protective factors.*

### **Concrete Support in Times of Need**

- Ensure parents can talk with staff with whom they feel most comfortable.
- Make space available for parents to meet privately with staff.
- Post up-to-date information about local programs and activities.
- Reduce stigma against needs assistance by focusing on benefits for child and family well-being.
- Create a resource book about local continuing education, job training, financial counseling, health care, housing assistance, utility assistance, and other emergency assistance.

### **Parental Resilience**

- Encourage parents to be active in decision-making concerning their children's education.
- Recognize parents' efforts and honor family contributions.
- Train staff to work with parents who have had adverse experiences and may need extra help to feel confident as parents.
- Talk about the importance of parent involvement in children's education. Discuss specific ways parents can be involved.
- Tell parents how they have a positive influence on behavior or school performance.
- Do not blame parents for children's challenging behaviors.

### **Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development**

- Regularly share information regarding children's progress via notes, e-mails, newsletters, and phone calls. Include simple, concrete ways parents can help their children learn. Personalize contact by including a brief note about the child.
- Look for each child's strengths. Share them with parents.
- Offer learning opportunities on typical child development, parent education, healthy couple relationships, stress reduction, continuing education, and others that can support families. Information about parenting or other family concerns should be relevant to diverse families including single parents, grandparents, foster/adoptive parents, and gay/lesbian couples.

### **Children's Social and Emotional Competence**

- Help parents understand that they are their children's role models. Talk about healthy ways to deal with stress and emotions.
- Share information about teaching children social skills (e.g., sharing and being respectful) and emotional skills (e.g., using words to express feelings and emotions).
- Encourage children to use visual art as a way to express feeling and emotions.
- Set clear and consistent boundaries.
- Provide unconditional support and convey a sense of optimism about every child's future.

### **Social Connections**

- Hold family activities that encourage interaction between families; encourage fathers, grandparents, and extended family to participate.
- Provide a welcoming space where parents can talk.
- Offer classes or discussion time when parents with similar concerns can be together.
- Invite families to share skills, talents, and cultural traditions with children and other parents.
- Identify parents who can help reach out and welcome new families.

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# Strong Parents, Stable Children: Building Protective Factors to Strengthen Families



## Faith Community

### What Are Protective Factors?

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Even when different families face similar struggles, some cope better than others. There are many reasons why families handle stress differently, but one has to do with protective factors. Protective factors are characteristics that promote optimal development by helping families succeed and thrive, even in the face of risks and challenges.

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#### Social Connections

*Families need to build and maintain positive relationships that can provide emotional, instrumental, informational, spiritual, and other helpful support.*

Entire communities play a role in the safety and well-being of children. Given that faith-based communities are a source of social support for many families, religious leaders are in a good position to offer support and collaborate with other community agencies and organizations to promote child and family well-being. They can often help families locate appropriate services and supports to get them through tough times.

Faith-based communities can help parents and caregivers develop communication and problem-solving skills that help them cope with crises so they can provide for their children and families. Religious leaders often have established relationships and trust with members of their congregation. They are natural mentors and support systems in the community. As such, when members of the congregation experience trauma or crises, they frequently turn to clergy for guidance. This also helps build resilience to deal with adverse situations in the future.

During discussions with families, look for signs of other potential needs. For example, if one family member expresses concern about another, it may signal a need for couples counseling or substance abuse treatment.

Congregation members are a captive audience. Look for opportunities to integrate information about protecting children, strengthening families, and building protective factors during religious services throughout the year. Develop bulletin or newsletter inserts to highlight the five protective factors. Reach out and find ways to meet the needs of struggling families *and* healthy families.

On the other side of this factsheet is a list of ways the faith community can help support and strengthen protective factors in children, families, and communities.

## **What Can the Faith Community Do to Support and Strengthen Families?**

*The faith community can play an important supportive role for many families. As such, religious leaders could have some influence on all five protective factors.*

### **Concrete Support in Times of Need**

- Affirm dedication to supporting families and protecting children. Ensure your place of worship has policies and practices in place to protect children.
- Have staff trained in recognizing and reporting signs of child abuse and neglect, domestic violence, working with victims and their families, and when/how to make referrals.
- Post up-to-date information about local programs and activities.
- Create a resource book about local continuing education, job training, financial counseling, health care, housing assistance, utility assistance, and other emergency assistance.
- Partner in establishing community groups focused on building protective factors, strengthening families, and reaching out to those in need.
- Establish mentoring programs for children and families under stress.

### **Parental Resilience**

- Foster a sense of hope, purpose, and meaning.
- Help parents understand that they are their children's role models. Talk about healthy ways to deal with stress and emotions.
- Offer classes on a variety of general interest topics, including communication, stress management, and conflict resolution.

### **Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development**

- Establish an easily accessible resource library or resource rack that contains information about parenting and child development.
- Sponsor parent education classes and support programs. Information about parenting or other family concerns needs to be relevant to diverse family types including single parents, grandparents, foster/adoptive parents, and gay/lesbian couples.

### **Children's Social and Emotional Competence**

- Develop supportive relationships with young children – provide encouragement, support, and help them feel valued.
- Learn about the relationship between child abuse and neglect, depression, substance abuse, domestic violence, and other risk factors.
- Provide unconditional support.
- Convey a sense of optimism about every child's future.

### **Social Connections**

- Hold family activities that encourage interaction between families; invite fathers, grandparents, and extended family to participate. Encourage families to be involved in planning these events.
- Provide a welcoming space where families can meet and talk.
- Offer support groups for parents and families with similar interests, concerns, and/or needs.
- Establish mentoring programs to help when children and families are struggling.
- Invite families to share skills, talents, and cultural traditions with other families.
- Some parents may need to develop social skills and self-confidence in order to expand their social networks. Help them identify resources and/or provide opportunities for them to make

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# Strong Parents, Stable Children: Building Protective Factors to Strengthen Families



## Health Care Providers

### What Are Protective Factors?

When children are raised in loving and caring environments, they are more prepared for the future. Every family experiences challenges and stress from time to time, so all parents need help to raise children to their fullest potential and reduce the likelihood of child maltreatment.

Even when different families face similar struggles, some cope better than others. There are many reasons why families handle stress differently, but one has to do with protective factors. Protective factors are characteristics that promote optimal development by helping families succeed and thrive, even in the face of risks and challenges.

Following are five protective factors that, when present, increase the overall well-being of children and families:

#### Concrete Support in Times of Need

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#### Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development

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*Children need help expressing their feelings and emotions. Parents can help children learn to communicate clearly, recognize and regulate emotions, and build and maintain relationships.*

#### Social Connections

*Families need to build and maintain positive relationships that can provide emotional, instrumental, informational, spiritual, and other helpful support.*

Pediatricians reach most American children. Parents look to them for expertise, guidance, and reassurance when children's behaviors or development are not typical. Given regular well-child check-ups, pediatricians are able to notice patterns of behavior over time and decide if additional supports and services may be necessary.

Parenting and children's health and development have a reciprocal relationship – each impacts the other. Many parents recognize how their stress affects their parenting and relationships. Pediatricians can help identify healthy ways to cope. In addition, health concerns, challenging behaviors, and other issues can cause a lot of stress. Providers need to be familiar with local support services to help families deal with these challenges.

Children are at greater risk of maltreatment when families are under a lot of stress. Numerous studies have shown that protective factors can reduce the likelihood of abuse and neglect. Health care providers can help parents who might otherwise be at risk of abusing their children find resources, supports, and coping strategies to help them parent effectively despite risks.

A growing body of research shows that childhood trauma, including exposure to violence, is linked to long-term negative mental and physical health outcomes. Particularly problematic are adverse experiences including living with a parent who has an untreated mental illness, substance abuse problems, and a family member's incarceration. When trauma is severe, prolonged, or unrelieved it can affect children's brain structure and function.

Protective factors can help relieve stress for many children, but for those in more severe cases, health care providers need to be ready to intervene.

On the other side of this factsheet is a list of the many ways health care providers can help strengthen families' protective factors.

## **What Can Health Care Providers Do to Support and Strengthen Families?**

*Health care providers could have some influence on all five protective factors.*

### **Concrete Support in Times of Need**

- Post up-to-date brochures about local programs, services, and activities.
- Reduce stigma against needs assistance by focusing on benefits for children and family well-being.
- Have materials available about effects of traumatic experiences on children and specific ways families can build resilience.
- Keep a resource book about local continuing education, job training, financial counseling, health care, housing assistance, utility assistance, and other emergency assistance.
- Ensure all staff know and understand requirements and steps for making referrals to child protective services.

### **Parental Resilience**

- Check on parents' mental health, especially post-partum depression.
- Talk about healthy ways to deal with stress and emotions. Mention that parents are their children's role models, so it is important for parents to manage their feelings, too.
- Recognize parents' efforts and point out specific ways their actions have helped their child.
- Train staff to work with parents who have had adverse experiences and may need extra help to feel confident as parents.

### **Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development**

- Talk about typical child development to help parents develop realistic expectations for their children's behaviors and abilities.
- Provide handouts with easy to understand parenting and child development information.
- Partner with local groups to offer parent education classes or provide a list of classes offered in the area. Include topics of interest to most parents (e.g., toilet training, discipline, alternate forms of punishment, appropriate developmental expectations, and social and emotional development in children) as well as more challenging parenting concerns (e.g., difficult child temperaments, recognizing and addressing attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, parenting children with developmental delays). Information about parenting or other family concerns needs to be relevant to diverse family types including single parents, grandparents, foster/adoptive parents, and gay/lesbian couples.
- Learn about local family resource centers, home visiting programs, and other support groups.

### **Children's Social and Emotional Competence**

- Emphasize the importance of healthy attachment and social-emotional development.
- Talk with parents and identify ways they can help if concerns are identified.
- Provide unconditional support and convey a sense of optimism about every child's future.

### **Social Connections**

- Encourage parents to develop and maintain connections with others.
- Set up the waiting room to be inviting for interaction between families.
- Offer parent support groups or parent education opportunities for parents with similar needs, challenges, and interests.

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# Strong Parents, Stable Children: Building Protective Factors to Strengthen Families



## Parents and Caregivers

### What Are Protective Factors?

When children are raised in loving and caring environments, they are more prepared for the future. Every family experiences challenges and stress from time to time, so all parents need help to raise children to their fullest potential and reduce the likelihood of child maltreatment.

Even when different families face similar struggles, some cope better than others. There are many reasons why families handle stress differently, but one has to do with protective factors. Protective factors are characteristics that promote optimal development by helping families succeed and thrive, even in the face of risks and challenges.

Following are five protective factors that, when present, increase the overall well-being of children and families:

#### Concrete Support in Times of Need

*Families need support and services that address their needs and help minimize stress caused by challenges.*

#### Parental Resilience

*Ability of parents to be strong and flexible when encountering difficulties, adversity, and trauma.*

#### Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development

*Parents need information and strategies to support physical, cognitive, language, social, and emotional development.*

#### Children's Social and Emotional Competence

*Children need help expressing their feelings and emotions. Parents can help children learn to communicate clearly, recognize and regulate emotions, and build and maintain relationships.*

#### Social Connections

*Families need to build and maintain positive relationships that can provide emotional, instrumental, informational, spiritual, and other helpful support.*

Families come in many shapes and sizes with different beliefs, values, and customs. One thing all families have in common is that they need protective factors to be strong and resilient.

Every family has strengths, and sometimes every family faces struggles. Even positive challenges, such as having a baby, starting a new job, or moving to a new home can cause a lot of stress for families. Trying to balance the many demands of work, keeping the home running, and keeping children happy, healthy, and safe can make us feel like there isn't enough time in a day.

All parents want the best for their children. We want our children to be happy, healthy, and to behave well. But we feel frustrated when we don't know how to handle problems.

One of the most important tools parents and caregivers need is information. If you or your child are struggling, do not be afraid to ask questions and seek help. If we as parents try to do everything on our own without seeking support, we only add to the stress we are already experiencing and also have less time to spend with our children.

Sometimes when bad things happen, we think of all the things we should have done differently. It is important to understand that no parent is perfect; no parent has all the answers. We can only do the best we can with the tools we have available to us.

When there are changes or problems at home, be sure to touch base with children's caregivers or teachers. These events could affect your child's behavior at school and teachers can help. For example, an illness or death in the family, divorce, parent's absence, or job loss could all cause stress for children. Teachers can give an extra hug and provide support if they are aware of these changes.

On the other side of this factsheet is a list of the many ways parents can help strengthen protective factors.

## **What Can the Parents and Caregivers Do to Support and Strengthen Families?**

*There are many ways parents and caregivers can help support and strengthen all five protective factors in their own family and those around them.*

### **Concrete Support in Times of Need**

- Join parent groups. Invite other parents to attend with you.
- Seek help and resources when you need them. It will help strengthen your family and improve child well-being.
- Volunteer to serve as a mentor for families in need in your school, church, or community.

### **Parental Resilience**

- Remember you are one of your children's most important role models. Find healthy ways to handle feelings and impulses.
- Build and maintain close relationships with family, friends, and other sources of support.
- Have confidence in your strengths and abilities.
- Find a trusted caregiver and take time for yourself from time to time. This is especially important if you are a single parent.
- See yourself as resilient (rather than as a victim).
- Find healthy ways to deal with stress; avoiding harmful coping strategies, such as substance abuse.
- Look for positive meaning in your life despite difficult or traumatic events.

### **Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development**

- Ask questions or share concerns – contact your child's caregiver, teacher, pediatrician, or others who can help answer questions and ease your mind.
- Attend parent education classes. This will help you learn more about typical child development so you have realistic expectations for your children.
- Sit and observe your children trying various tasks. See what they can and cannot do.

### **Children's Social and Emotional Competence**

- Be supportive and understanding – provide encouragement and help them feel valued.
- Joke and laugh with children.
- Provide unconditional support.
- Be willing to apologize and admit mistakes.
- Provide regular routines for children.
- Ask what makes them feel happy and sad.
- Be involved in your children's school – it will increase your social connections and help your children see that you value education.

### **Social Connections**

- Participate in family activities in your children's school, neighborhood, or community. Fathers, grandparents, and extended family are also encouraged to participate. Build more social connections by helping plan these events.
- Participate in support groups with other parents and families who have similar interests, concerns, and/or needs.
- Encourage your employer, school, church, and other community groups to offer family-friendly activities.

*Funding for this project was provided by the Missouri Department of Mental Health/Project LAUNCH and developed by University of Missouri Extension in partnership with the Missouri Department of Mental Health/Project LAUNCH and the Missouri Children's Trust Fund. Content is based on the Strengthening Families framework, developed by the Center for the Study of Social Policy (CSSP). The framework is intended to help increase family strengths, enhance child development, and reduce child abuse and neglect.*