



Goals

- List five protective factors that help keep families strong and prevent child abuse and neglect.
- Understand what it means to work with families in a strength-based way.
- Be acquainted with the Strengthening Families Logic Model and Framework.

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

The Strengthening Families Protective Factors Framework is a national and international initiative aimed to develop and enhance five specific characteristics (called protective factors) that help keep families strong and children safe from abuse and neglect. The Center for the Study of Social Policy (CSSP), with funding from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, developed the framework. The initial goal was to create a national, systematic approach to prevention that would reach large numbers of children long before abuse or neglect occurred. The Protective Factors Framework was designed to assist professionals who work with children and families in promotion the optimal development of all children while protecting vulnerable children from maltreatment.

Goals:

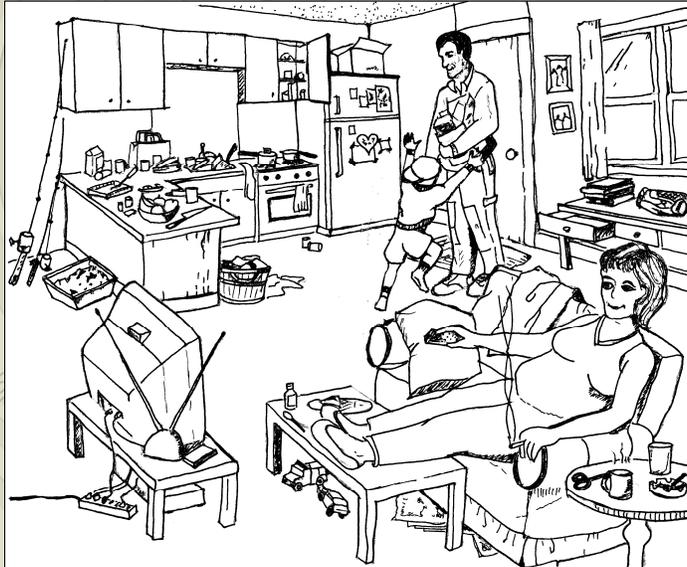
List Five Protective Factors that help keep families strong and prevent child abuse and neglect.

Understand what it means to work with families in a strength-based way, including our own families.

Be acquainted with the Strengthening Families Logic Model and Framework.

Risk and Protective Factors Cartoon

Social and Emotional Competence of Children



In order to understand what Protective Factors are, we have to look with a strength based lens. An individualized, strength-based approach is an essential foundation to supporting families as they build protective factors. However, when a problem presents itself, professionals often focus on the problem, seeking out whatever expert advice they feel has the promise of resolving the problem. It is important to understand that a protective factor approach is not about denying that risk factors exist.

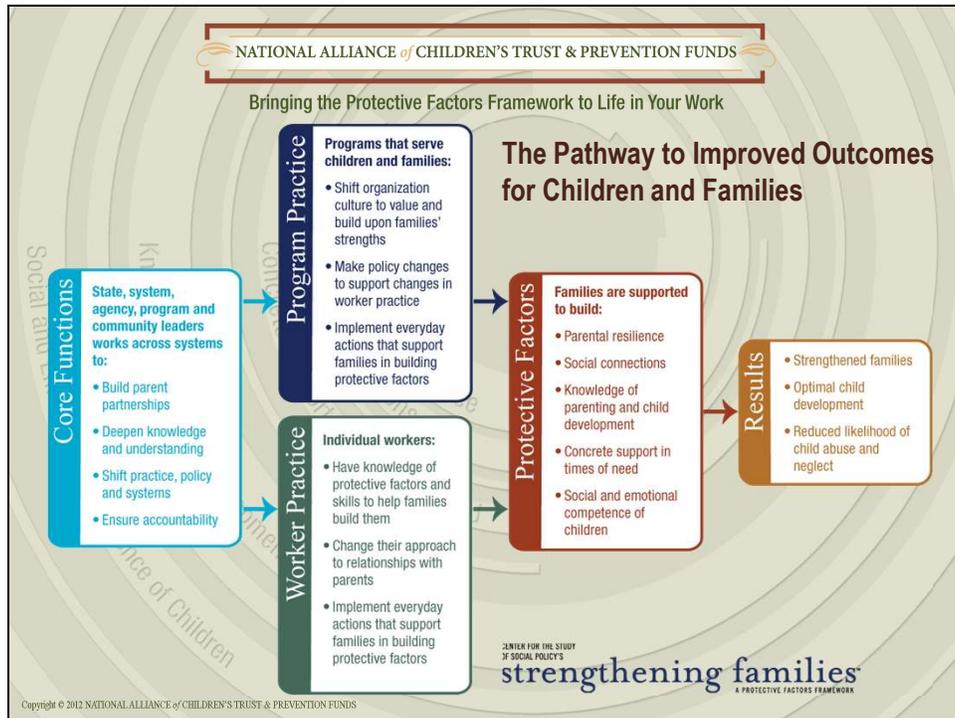
Bringing the Protective Factors Framework to Life in Your Work

Strength-Based Theory: Looking at Families Through a Different Lens

Focus on what's **strong**,
not what's **wrong**!



Focusing on what is “strong” instead of only what is “wrong” is a way to honor a family’s or individual’s own resources and strengths as a foundation for addressing change.



A protective factor is a characteristic that makes a parent, child, or family more likely to thrive and less likely to experience a negative outcome. A protective factor is like the flip side of a risk factor. You can also think of protective factors as what help children and families thrive despite whatever risk factors they might face.

The Strengthening Families protective factors were chosen based on extensive research about children and families. They are not the only protective factors that keep families strong. They were selected because they can be built through interaction with the people and systems that families encounter in their day-to-day lives.

The Protective Factors Framework is not like most approaches to child abuse and neglect prevention. Often, programs target specific families to participate because of the risk factors they face. In Strengthening Families, ALL FAMILIES are included, because all families need some support in building protective factors. Those families who need intensive support are more likely to be identified and to accept help (such as referrals to other programs and services) when we begin by being open and reaching out to all families.

Protective Factors

- ① Parental Resilience
- ② Social Connections
- ③ Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development
- ④ Concrete Support in Times of Need
- ⑤ Social and Emotional Competence of Children

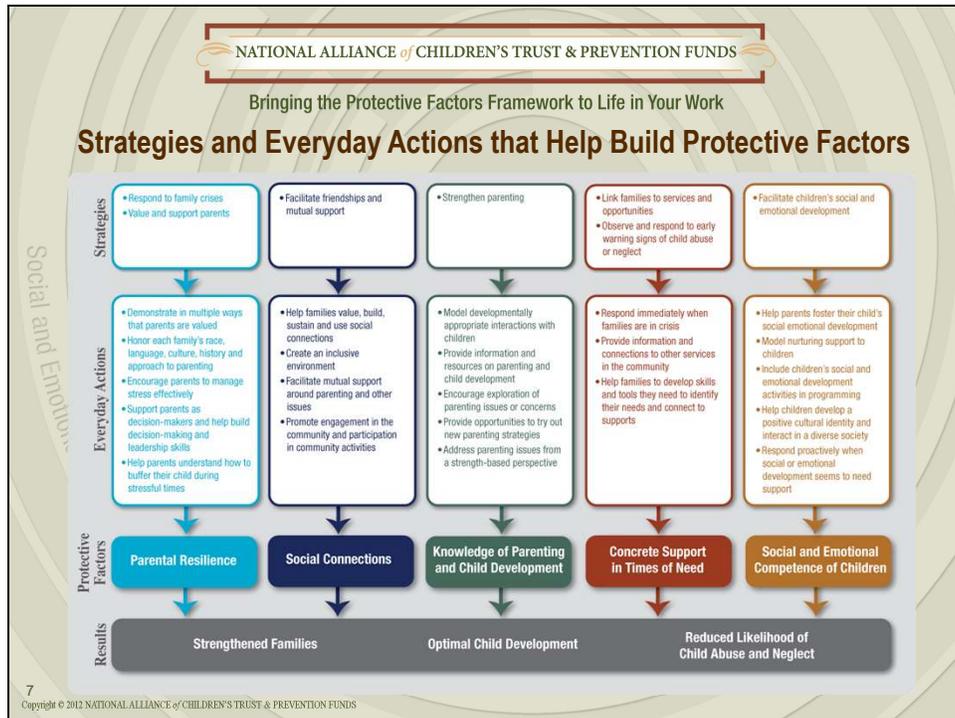
Defining the Five Protective Factors

Families Are Supported to Build

Protective Factor	Definition
Parental Resilience	The ability to recover from difficult life experiences, and often to be strengthened by and even transformed by those experiences.
Social Connections	Positive relationships that provide emotional, informational, instrumental and spiritual support.
Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development	Understanding child development and parenting strategies that support physical, cognitive, language, social and emotional development.
Concrete Support In Times of Need	Access to concrete support and services that address a family's needs and help minimize stress caused by challenges.
Social and Emotional Competence of Children	Family and child interactions that help children develop the ability to communicate clearly, recognize and regulate their emotions and establish and maintain relationships.

Defining the Five Protective Factors (p.7)

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- **Social and Emotional Competence of Children:** Family and child interactions that help children develop the ability to communicate clearly, recognize and regulate their emotions and establish and maintain relationships.



Webster's dictionary defines a strategy as "a careful plan or method for achieving a particular goal—usually over a long period of time." As you consider what every day actions you can take to provide concrete supports in times of need, realize that these "small but significant" concrete steps are necessary parts of a larger and longer term plan that helps build stronger families and strong support systems in your community.

Protective Factors Are Dependent on Culture

As we consider each Protective Factor, ask yourself these three questions:

1. How does culture impact this Protective Factor in a family?
2. How does your own culture shape how you feel, how you react and what you say or think?
3. How does culture impact what you are teaching?



Every one of the protective factors is dramatically dependent on culture. As we consider each protective factor, stop to ask yourself these three questions:

How does culture impact this protective factor in a family or community?

How does your own culture shape how you feel, how you react, and what you say or think?

How does culture impact what you are teaching?

Why Is It Important to Build Partnerships with Families?



- The family is the center of a child's life; working with parents gives us a more holistic view of how to support and strengthen that family.
- Highly involved families almost double the positive odds for their children in education, health promotion and social-emotional development.

The family is the center of a child's life, working with parents gives us a more holistic view of how to support and strengthen that family. Highly involved families almost double the positive odds for their children in education, health promotion, and social-emotional development. The more the family has access to, the stronger the family will be.

Why Do Parents Get Involved?

- They believe the issue is important to them and their family.
- They believe they have something to contribute.
- They believe they will be listened to and their contributions respected.
- They believe that their participation will make a difference.



Parents will get involved when they believe the issues is important to them and their family, when they have something contribute, when they believe they will be listened to and their contributions respected, and when they believe that their participation will make a difference.

How Do Parents Stay Involved?



- Multiple opportunities for participation, from a small contribution of time to progressively larger contributions of time and effort.
- Families receive sufficient advanced notice.
- Their participation is facilitated by: child care, transportation, dinner, some form of compensation, educational benefits.

Parents will stay involved when they have multiple opportunities for participation, when they receive sufficient notice, and when their participation is support in terms of essential needs (food, child care, educational benefits, transportation, etc.).

How Do Parents Stay Involved?

- Families are listened to: their ideas are supported and respected.
- They do not experience retribution as a result of their participation.
- Family participation has an impact.
- Their participation is consciously and visibly appreciated.



When families are listened to, they will stay involved.

Getting Started – Engaging Parents

- Ask parents what they want and need from your program.
- Frame it in terms of the protective factors:
 - What's hard about parenting?
 - How can we be a more welcoming place for parents, where families feel comfortable asking for help or advice?
 - How can we reach out to and support families when they are overwhelmed, stressed or isolated?
 - How can we make it easier for parents to connect to each other?

The Critical Role Parents Play in Strengthening Families (p.16)



The "five finger poster" was inspired by a parent leadership council with direct input in language. It was created by the Early Childhood Collaborative in Michigan as part of its, "What Makes Your Family Strong?" messaging campaign. It is available for downloading at www.whatmakesyourfamilystrong.org. Since the creation of this poster, the parent leadership council has expanded its messaging campaign to include the website, a community strengthening families guide and additional promotional materials.

- The thumb can help you remember Social and Emotional Competence of Children because a "thumbs up" is one of the first ways we learn to communicate our emotions.
- Your index finger represents Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development because you are your child's 1st teacher!
- Your middle finger can help you remember Social Connections because it should never stand alone! We all need a positive social network.
- Your ring finger stands for Parental Resilience because your first commitment must be to yourself in order to be strong for others.
- Your pinky finger signifies Concrete Support in Times of Need because it is the smallest finger and reminds us that we all need help sometimes.

The "How to Remember the 5 Protective Factors" poster was inspired by a parent leadership council with direct input on language.

This is an example of how one community engaged and valued parent input to build the Strengthening Families Protective Factors.

Since the creation of these posters, they have expanded their messaging campaign to include a website (www.whatmakesyourfamilystrong.org), a community Strengthening Families guide, and additional promotional materials.

What Makes Your Family Strong?

This is a messaging campaign designed by an
Early Childhood Collaborative in Michigan.

The common language in these posters was created with
parent input and for parent engagement.

The What Makes Your Family Strong? campaign has attracted
attention across the country and can be used as a training
tool with professionals and parents.

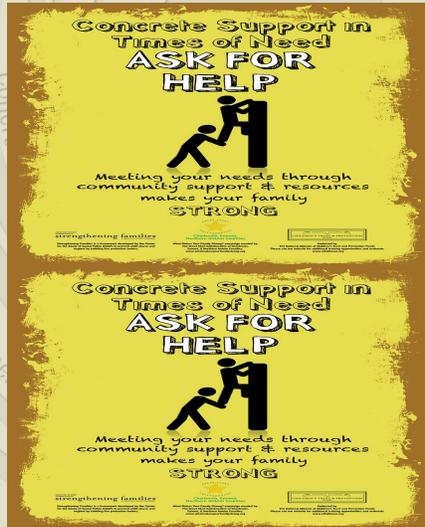
To download posters, visit: www.whatmakesyourfamilystrong.org

SECTION 4: ACTION

What Makes Your Family Strong? (p.11) These posters share a parent's perspective about the Strengthening Families™ Protective Factors Framework – and are meant to help you think of them in your own language and be able to easily remember them.

NATIONAL ALLIANCE of CHILDREN'S TRUST & PREVENTION FUNDS

Bringing the Protective Factors Framework to Life in Your Work
<http://www.whatmakesyourfamilystrong.org/>



Social and Emotional Competence of Children
Knowledge of Child Development

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Social and Emotional Competence of Children
Knowledge of Child Development
Concern

WHAT MAKES YOUR FAMILY STRONG?

THE REALITY IS...
Hard Times, Adversity, Distress, Hard Choices, Bad Breaks, Difficulties, Tough Times, Challenges can and do affect your family.

THE GOOD NEWS IS...
The right help you and your children face to help define your family - Protective Factors for Research shows that when these 7 Protective Factors are well established, family strength & optimal child development emerge.

Protective Challenges
* Develop your inner strength

Social Connections
* Know a friend

Knowledge of Parenting & Child Development
* Know to be your child's support

Concrete Support in Times of Need
* Ask for help

Social & Emotional Competence of Children
* Give your child words to express how they feel

Strengthening families
National Alliance of Children's Trust & Prevention Funds
www.whatmakesyourfamilystrong.org

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Strengthening families
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Learn More About the Protective Factors

- Explore the Alliance online training – with a course on each Protective Factor – free of charge on the Alliance website:
<http://ctfalliance.org/onlinetraining.htm>
- Discover resource materials about the Protective Factors on the Center for the Study of Social Policy website:
<http://www.cssp.org/reform/strengtheningfamilies/about#protective-factors-framework>
 - Research briefs about each Protective Factor
 - Core meanings of the Protective Factors
 - PowerPoint slides about the Protective Factors
 - The research behind the Protective Factors