

Looking at Families Through a Different Lens

Bringing the Protective Factors Framework to Life In Your Work



NATIONAL ALLIANCE of CHILDREN'S TRUST & PREVENTION FUNDS

Social Connections

Bringing the Protective Factors Framework to Life in Your Work – A Resource for Action



Bringing the Protective Factors Framework to Life in Your Work

How to remember the 5 PROTECTIVE FACTORS that make your family strong.



Use your Thumb to remember

**Social & Emotional
Competence of
Children**

because a "thumbs up"
is one of the first ways
we learn to communicate
our emotions.



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.



Your Index Finger represents
**Knowledge of Parenting
and Child Development**

because you are your child's
1st teacher!

Your Ring Finger stands for
Parental Resilience

because your first commitment
must be to yourself in order
to be strong for others.



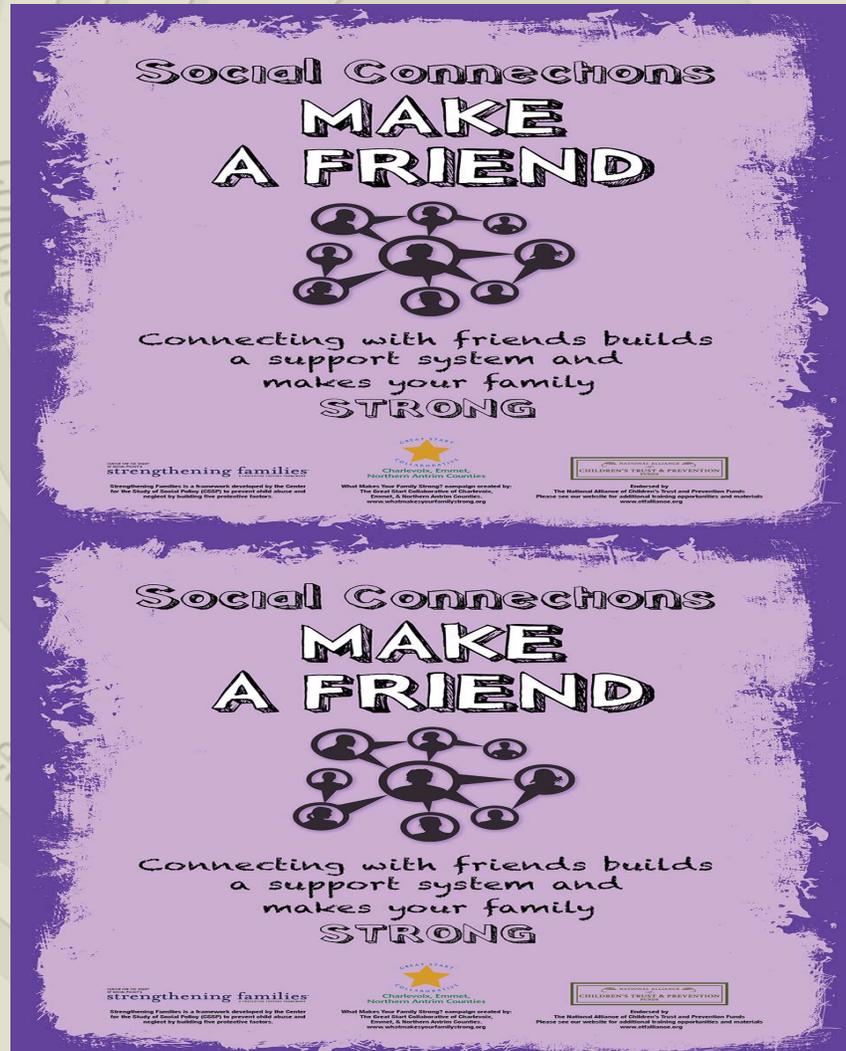
Your Middle Finger can
help you remember
Social Connections
because it should never
stand alone! We all need a
positive social network.



www.strengtheningfamilies.org

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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Essential Elements / Common Threads

- What are Social Connections?
- The Antidote to Social Isolation
- The Important Role of Communication
- How Social Connections Fits into the Framework (logic model)
- **Everyday Actions that Build Positive Social Connections**
 - Help families value, build, sustain and use social connections
 - Create an inclusive environment
 - Facilitate mutual support around parenting and other issues
 - Promote engagement in the community and participation in community activities

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Goals

- Understand the value of helping parents and families connect to others in a variety of ways that reduce their isolation and increase their social supports.
- Discuss at least three ways that you can encourage parents to make these connections.
- Create some concrete plans to assist parents in developing new friendships and finding new sources of support – in the workplace or the community.

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What Does It Mean to Have Social Connections?

As one parent put it:

*“Not being alone – realizing
that other people are there
and sometimes have the
same problems.”*



Social Connections

“Parents with a social network of emotionally supportive friends, family, and neighbors often find that it is easier to care for their children and themselves. Most parents need people they can call on once in a while when they need a sympathetic listener, advice, or concrete support. Research has shown that parents who are isolated, with few social connections, are at higher risk for child abuse and neglect.”

~ Child Welfare Information Gateway

What do positive social connections look like?

- Family or Friends who provide free childcare when parents need a break.
- Parents with children around the same age who get together to enjoy activities together.
- A friend to take the “night off” with to laugh and relax.
- Parenting friends with whom you can share the ups and downs of parenting.
- Someone who can pick up your child from school or an activity when you have an emergency.
- Neighbors who pass along hand-me-downs clothes and baby gear
- Someone to take a walk with to stay healthy.
- “Virtual friends” through Facebook, Instagram, Blogs or other social media where you can share stories, parenting tips, and photos.

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<https://ctfalliance.org/partnering-with-parents/parent-voice/>

CONVERSATIONS for a better normal Everyday Actions that Help Build Parental Resilience

Parental Resilience
The ability to recover from difficult life experiences, and often to be strengthened by and even transformed by those experiences.

Everyday Actions that Help Build Resilience

- Demonstrate in multiple ways that parents are valued.
- Honor each family's race, language, culture, history and approach to parenting.
- Encourage parents to manage stress effectively.
- Support parents as decision makers and help build decision-making and leadership skills.
- Help parents understand how to buffer their child during stressful times.

Questions to Consider

- What are some ways parents in your community are being valued during this crisis?
 - What is one of the kind things someone in your community has done for you during the current COVID-19 pandemic?
- How has your community, race, faith, culture or belief system helped you remain strong or feel valued during this crisis?
 - How can we learn from each other to demonstrate diverse ways to cope with crisis?
- What are some ways that you can remind yourself to deal with stress effectively?
 - How can you encourage others to do the same?
- Staying positive during times of crisis can be challenging. Our children and peers look to us for leadership. How do you find the courage to lead by example in your family and community?
 - What do you need to know so that you can feel strong in being a parent during these times? How are you staying strong to face each day?
- As you face this COVID-19 crisis, what are some ways that you protect your child from being negatively impacted?
 - Seeing this crisis from your child's eyes, what are some ways you are protecting them during this time? Both physically and emotionally?

Actions I Can Take

CONVERSATIONS for a better normal

How Protective Factors Can Make Families Strong during COVID-19 Pandemic

Ways to Use the Conversation Tool

The Group

- Consider the parent, staff or community group that might benefit from a conversation that focuses on strengths during this crisis.
- With your group in mind, use the facilitator worksheets to design your conversation for each protective factor.
- Brand Bowen shares that one of her key insights about remote learning is to deliver it in small chunks – not more than 30 minutes at a time.

The Questions

- Select the questions that seem to arise your group best at this time. Feel free to adjust or restate the questions to reflect your group's culture.
- You may choose to focus on a specific protective factor, or you may decide to combine questions from selected protective factors.
- You'll find a worksheet for each protective factor in the Participant Worksheets PDF. If you choose, you can distribute the worksheet to all of the participants before the scheduled meeting. Some virtual platforms, such as Zoom or GoToMeeting, will allow you to attach the worksheet as a handout for your meeting.

CONVERSATIONS for a better normal... 1

Conversations for a better normal...

- **The COVID-19 Crisis is not something any of us planned on. It has brought up many unexpected challenges. What is the most critical support you need right now as a parent?**
 - **What have you learned about yourself, that might help inform the way you support other parents?**
- **During this time of social distancing, what are some ways you are finding to sustain your relationships with friends and family?**
 - **In what ways have you become a support system to others during times of distancing?**
- **How is your community rising to the occasion in the COVID-19 crisis in a positive manner?**
 - **What has your community, family and friends done to ensure you are connected to virtual conversations and spaces to learn from others?**
 - **How is this working for those who cannot connect virtually?**

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What Do You Miss about "Human Connections"?



Has your perspective around virtual/digital relationships changed since COVID?

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Social Connections

Brook's Choice

- What strengths do you see this mother display, despite her challenges?
- Brook describes her concerns about making this new friendship. What finally makes her bypass her fears and take a chance on this new friend?
- Where did Brook's new friendship lead? How has it lessened the stress she was feeling before she talked with her neighbor?



Bringing the Protective Factors Framework to Life in Your Work

Social Connections

Talk about
children
and parenting

See other parents
"in action"

Vent frustrations

Give and get
advice

Trade child care

Share resources

Share joys
and challenges
of parenting



Who Would You Call?

In case of an emergency, who would call?

If this first person was unavailable, who would you call instead?

And if the first two people were unavailable, who would call as your third option?

And if all three of these individuals were unavailable, who would be the fourth person you reach out to?

- **Recognize situation and context may result in you reaching out to different people.**
- **Consider how these people are connected to you.**
- **How important is it to have these people?**
- **What happens when families do have a system in place, vs. when they do not?**



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The Pathway to Improved Outcomes for Children and Families

Core Functions

State, system, agency, program and community leaders works across systems to:

- Build parent partnerships
- Deepen knowledge and understanding
- Shift practice, policy and systems
- Ensure accountability

Program Practice

Programs that serve children and families:

- Shift organization culture to value and build upon families' strengths
- Make policy changes to support changes in worker practice
- Implement everyday actions that support families in building protective factors

Worker Practice

Individual workers:

- Have knowledge of protective factors and skills to help families build them
- Change their approach to relationships with parents
- Implement everyday actions that support families in building protective factors

Protective Factors

Families are supported to build:

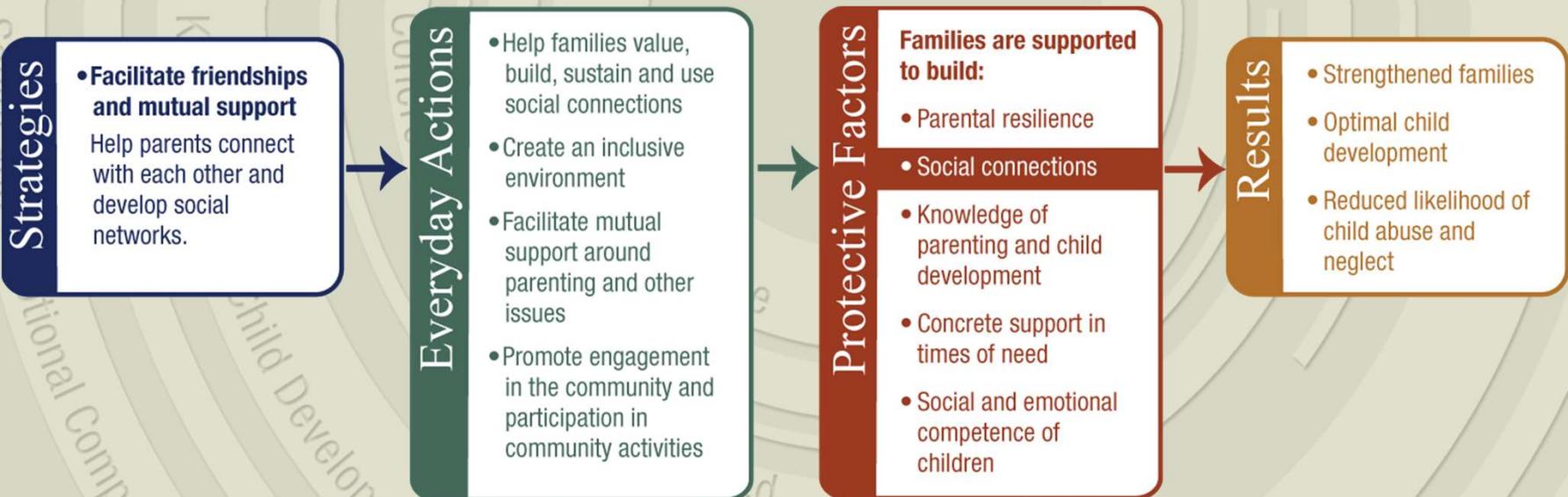
- Parental resilience
- Social connections
- Knowledge of parenting and child development
- Concrete support in times of need
- Social and emotional competence of children

Results

- Strengthened families
- Optimal child development
- Reduced likelihood of child abuse and neglect

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Strategies and Everyday Actions to Build Social Connections



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Concrete Examples of Everyday Actions that Help Build Social Connections

Strategies

- **Facilitate friendships and mutual support**
Help parents connect with each other and develop social networks.

Everyday Actions

- Help families value, build, sustain and use social connections
- Create an inclusive environment
- Facilitate mutual support around parenting and other issues
- Promote engagement in the community and participation in community activities

Concrete Examples

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

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***“All alone!
Whether you like it or not,
alone is something you’ll be quite a lot!”***

*– Dr. Seuss, Oh, the Places You’ll
Go! and The Lorax*



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Essential Elements

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- The Important Role of Communication
- Social Connections and Parental Involvement
- How Social Connections Fits into the Framework (logic model)
- **Everyday Actions that Build Positive Social Connections**
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The Children's Trust Fund Alliance:

- Ensures all states have a strong and effective children's trust or prevention fund capable of leading and investing in strategies, policies and best practices that prevent child abuse and neglect before it occurs.
- Initiates and engages in national efforts that help state children's trust and prevention funds in strengthening families to prevent child abuse and neglect.
- Promotes and supports a system of services, laws, practices and attitudes that supports families by enabling them to provide their children with safe, healthy and nurturing childhoods.

Bringing the Protective Factors Framework to Life in Your Work

Contact

- If you have questions about *Bringing the Protective Factors Framework to Life in Your Work*, please contact the Alliance at:

- **info@ctfalliance.org**

- If you are interested in participating in a Training for Trainers for *Bringing the Protective Factors Framework to Life in Your Work*, please contact the Alliance at:

- **tot@ctfalliance.org**