2023/2024

Prevention Resource Guide

23rd National Conference on Child Abuse & Neglect

Doing Things Differently:
Moving from the Challenge to the Change

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES
Administration on Children, Youth and Families
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Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Colleagues:

The Children's Bureau embraces a vision that uses a loving approach to helping children obtain what they need to live with dignity by comprehensively supporting families through a collaborative network of carefully selected resources and effective public and private investments, grounded in community and culture, with a workforce fully devoted to serving with intentional equity. To achieve this vision, it is imperative to explore and invest in innovative, new ideas to transform the way we deliver services.

It is time for us to do things differently to prevent child abuse and neglect. Intentionally engaging in systemic and self-reflection and evaluation is integral to change and meaningful progress. Building on this concept, the theme of the 23rd National Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect and accompanying Prevention Resource Guide is, "Doing Things Differently: Moving From the Challenge to the Change."

It is critical to partner with families and others with lived experience to understand how existing policies and practices may be creating harm rather than strengthening families. Parents and caregivers are experts on their families' strengths. Lasting change will only be possible when they are not just at the table but actively involved and leading each decision to ensure effective planning, implementation, and evaluation of services and resources. This means exploring together strategies that support instead of surveil families experiencing poverty. This also means hiring and supporting a diverse and representative workforce that understands the needs of the communities being served.

This *2023/2024 Prevention Resource Guide* offers critical information, including concrete examples of how grant recipients and other Federal or national agencies are taking bold actions to authentically engage with and support families. The guide outlines the information through a social-ecological approach to reinforce the need to be aware of and address the impacts of factors at the societal, systemic, organizational, community, and family levels that can strengthen or challenge families. Developed with direct input from individuals with lived experience, the guide also features tools to aid practitioners in having conversations with parents and caregivers that focus on emphasizing parent strengths by highlighting the ways in which they nurture and meet their families' needs.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, parents and caregivers have shown us that with strong partnerships and the right supports families can thrive even through the most difficult of times. We hope this year's guide compels you to think critically about the strengths of the children and families in your community and how to honor their voices and support them with dignity. Thank you for your commitment to our families.

In Unity,

/s/

Aysha E. Schomburg, J.D., Associate Commissioner
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CHAPTER ONE

Laying the Foundation

Welcome!

If you are here, you are someone who cares about families. You are in good company. This Prevention Resource Guide was created to support all who seek to promote family well-being and prevent child abuse and neglect. Our hope is that many people like you—including community-based service providers, policymakers, health-care providers, program administrators, teachers, child care providers, parent leaders, mentors, judges and attorneys, and faith leaders—may find these resources useful.

IN THIS CHAPTER:

- Protective Factors
- A Social-Ecological Approach
- Committing to Equity

Because we each come to this common goal with different backgrounds and experiences, this chapter introduces a few key concepts that make up the foundation for the resources and examples provided in this guide. We hope that these resources will be useful to you as you partner with others in your community to support families.

PROTECTIVE FACTORS

The Office on Child Abuse and Neglect, within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Children's Bureau, released its first Prevention Resource Guide more than 15 years ago with the goal of raising awareness about emerging child abuse prevention concepts. As in past years, this guide was developed in partnership with Child Welfare Information Gateway and the FRIENDS National Center for Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention.

Child abuse prevention occurs at three levels: primary (directed at the general population), secondary (focused on families where risk factors are present), and tertiary (focused on families where maltreatment has already occurred). This guide focuses on primary and secondary prevention: stopping abuse or neglect before it occurs. Because no one can predict exactly where, when, or in which families abuse or neglect will occur, we believe the best way to prevent it is to create conditions in which *all* families can thrive.

Promoting protective factors has been the foundation of the Prevention Resource Guide for many years. Protective factors are positive conditions or attributes in individuals, families, communities, or the larger society that mitigate or eliminate risk in families and communities, thereby increasing the health and well-being of children and families. Protective factors help parents find resources, supports, or coping strategies that allow them to parent effectively, even under stress. Since 2007, this Prevention Resource Guide has employed a protective factors framework adapted from the Strengthening Families framework, developed by the Center for the Study of Social Policy (CSSP).

The following are the six protective factors in this framework:

- Nurturing and attachment[1]
- Knowledge of parenting and child and youth development
- Parental resilience
- Social connections
- Concrete supports for parents
- Social and emotional competence of children

A protective factors approach to the prevention of child maltreatment focuses on positive ways to engage families by emphasizing their strengths and what is going well, as well as identifying areas where families may need additional support to reach their full potential. This approach also can serve as the basis for collaborative partnerships with other service providers, such as early childhood, behavioral health, maternal and child health, and other family-serving systems that support children and families and promote well-being.

The protective factors are universal, but they manifest differently in different cultural and familial contexts. In applying the framework, those working with families are encouraged to affirm families' culture and parenting styles and to support children's positive identity development and ability to thrive in a diverse society (C. O'Connor, CSSP, May 13, 2022).

Today, the importance of protective factors is widely recognized. Some communities have risen to the challenge and created comprehensive family well-being systems that wrap an array of protective interventions around families with phenomenal results. However, many child- and family-serving agencies and systems still struggle to consistently integrate and implement a protective factors approach in their day-to-day engagement with families.

This Prevention Resource Guide focuses on cultivating deeper understanding and providing examples of how families, neighborhoods, communities, and States are using protective factors in their efforts to protect children, strengthen families, and promote well-being. Throughout this guide, the protective factors serve as a theoretical underpinning for many of the strategies described. Although they are not always referenced directly, they continue to be infused in this work in countless ways.

Foundational information about the protective factors can be found on the Child Welfare Information Gateway website. For a list of protective factors resources, see page 53 of this guide.

[1] "Nurturing and attachment" is not delineated as a separate protective factor within Strengthening Families; however, it is an implicit and valued component to the entire framework.

Children's Bureau Grant Programs

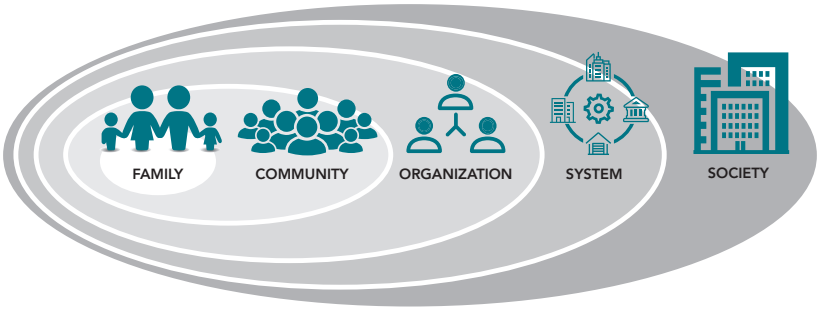
The following Children's Bureau grant programs support multidisciplinary, community-level efforts to create child and family well-being systems that prevent child abuse and neglect. Examples from each program are featured throughout this guide.

Established in 1996, the **Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention** (CBCAP) program supports grants in each State that—among many important actions—develop, operate, enhance, and coordinate efforts to prevent child abuse and neglect and strengthen and support families.

Community Collaborations to Strengthen and Preserve Families grants, funded in 2018 and 2019, support further development, implementation, and evaluation of community-based primary prevention strategies.

The 2021 **Family Support Through Primary Prevention (FSPP) grants** are intended to demonstrate integrated, cross-sector approaches to transforming traditional child welfare systems into comprehensive child and family well-being systems that enhance protective factors in racially and culturally appropriate ways.

A SOCIAL-ECOLOGICAL APPROACH



All families face stressors and challenges that are beyond their control. A social-ecological model acknowledges the many different levels of factors that influence caregivers' ability to nurture and protect their children. These levels include society (e.g., Federal and State policies and societal norms about parenting), system (e.g., collaborations within a community or jurisdiction to support families), organization (e.g., programs and policies of a single agency), community (e.g., representing the voices of community members and leaders with lived experience), and the family itself.

The overlapping rings in the model show how factors at one level influence those at other levels. To prevent maltreatment, it is often necessary to act at multiple levels of the model at the same time.

The next five chapters of this guide each address a different level of the social-ecological model:

- Chapter 2: Creating a More Supportive Society for All Families
- Chapter 3: Building Proactive Child and Family Well-Being Systems
- Chapter 4: Aligning Organizations for Family Resilience and Healing
- Chapter 5: Embracing Community and the Wisdom of Families With Lived Expertise
- Chapter 6: Protective Factors Conversation Guides for Partnering With Families

These chapters offer a wealth of information, resources, and examples from Federal partners, Children's Bureau grant recipients, as well as communities and organizations—publicly and privately funded—that have employed the strategies in this guide in their efforts to effect real change for children and families.

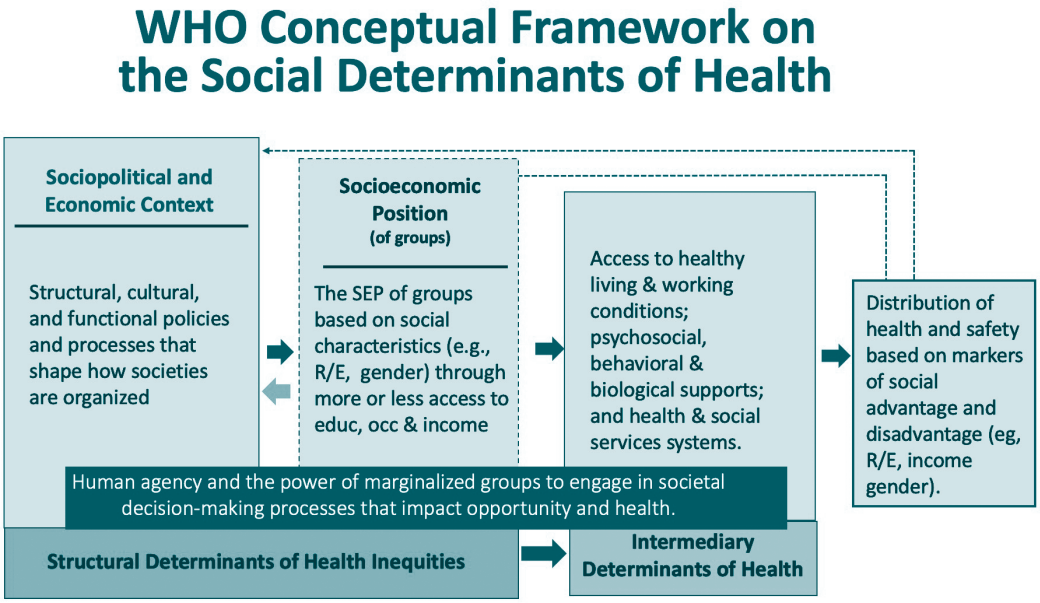
We have found that the most successful prevention efforts are rarely accomplished by implementing an isolated program or practice. Instead, these efforts employ and integrate many of the concepts represented here over time, in authentic partnership with families and through innovative collaboration with an array of partners, building on lessons learned along the way.

COMMITTING TO EQUITY

Families are impacted by organizations, systems, and society in different ways. We know that some families, including families of color and those living in poverty, experience disproportionate systemic challenges, such as underresourced neighborhoods, barriers to employment, discriminatory housing practices, and racially biased policing that routinely challenge the foundation of strong families and communities. When we disregard the additional stressors families of color and those living in poverty face, we risk blaming families for poor outcomes rather than taking into account the burdens of oppression and stigma they face.

For these reasons, we have found two additional models essential to expanding the conversation about the myriad influences on family well-being and what we all can do to change inequitable systems:

- The CSSP created a Social Ecological Model of Racism & Anti-Racism that describes what racism looks like at each of four social-ecological levels: intrapersonal, interpersonal, institutional/community, and systemic/societal. At each level, the model also describes actions everyone can take to work toward antiracist systems, institutions, and relationships.
- The World Health Organization's (WHO's) social determinants of health framework can help us consider the ways that socioeconomic and political contexts (including policies and societal values) drive inequitable child and family well-being outcomes.[2] It encourages looking beyond programs that focus on improving the situations of families that are already in vulnerable living and working conditions ("intermediary determinants") toward the creation of policies and processes ("structural determinants") that can create more equitable opportunities for health and well-being for *all* families, across generations.



Adapted from: WHO. (2010). A conceptual framework for action on the social determinants of health. WHO. https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/44489

[2] For more about this model and its application to adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), see https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0190740916303449.

The impact of societal inequities can be readily seen in child and family services. Historically, families of color have been overregulated and oversurveilled by the child welfare system (see sidebar on page 6).[3] Generations of Native American families have been traumatized by policies that contributed to widespread, systematic removal of their children. Poverty continues to be confused with neglect by decision makers at all levels of the child welfare system. Concerns remain regarding the marginalization and diminished roles of fathers. In addition, children and youth with diverse sexual orientations and gender identities and expressions have been significantly overrepresented in a foster care system that is too often ill-equipped for their needs, resulting in higher rates of entry and lower rates of reunification with family than their heterosexual and cisgender peers. One analysis of nationally representative data found that lesbian, gay, bisexual, and same-sex attracted youth were nearly 2.5 times as likely as heterosexual youth to be placed in foster care.

The Children's Bureau is committed to the work of advancing equity. In response to Executive Order 13985 on "Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government," the Children's Bureau has prioritized the review and identification of its own policies that exacerbate inequity. As a result, the Children's Bureau has outlined specific steps it is taking to address equity in the Equity Public Statement. This work is crucial to increasing benefits to Black and Brown children, including families who have experienced multigenerational systemic interventions and inequitable outcomes.

Throughout this Prevention Resource Guide, we have emphasized the inclusion of examples of family support strategies that take an antiracist approach.

In our work with children and families, it is important to ask ourselves, "Are we administering our programs equitably? Are we listening to and partnering with the families and communities that are most affected by inequities? Are we removing the obstacles to access? What more do we need to do?" To that end, chapters 2 through 5 conclude with a series of "questions to consider." We invite you to use these both for individual reflection in your work with families and as a starting point for collective action within your agency, community group, or jurisdiction.

[3] Cilia, A. (2021). The family regulation system: Why those committed to racial justice must interrogate it. *Harvard Civil Rights – Civil Liberties Law Review*. https://harvardcrcl.org/the-family-regulation-system-why-those-committed-to-racial-justice-must-interrogate-it/

Movement-Building Organizations Supporting Equity and Family Integrity

The *upEND Movement*, a collaborative movement launched by CSSP and the University of Houston Graduate College of Social Work, argues that the current child protection system and its policies and practices are deeply rooted in racism, which results in surveillance and separation of families. It proposes to dismantle, rather than reform, the current oppressive system and create new, antiracist ways in which society supports children, families, and communities, including through structures and practices that address family poverty and strengthen families while keeping children safe and thriving in their homes. A 2021 report, *How We endUP*, offers ideas about how communities can move toward the abolition of family policing while asserting that specific policy and practice changes must be developed in community.

Through its UnSystem Innovation Cohort, Minneapolis-based nonprofit organization Alia committed to guiding a set of 10 public child welfare agency leaders representing five jurisdictions through a whole-system transformation process. From 2018 to 2021, each jurisdiction worked with one professional and one lived-experience guide toward the common aspiration: "Family connections are always preserved and strengthened." At its completion, which involved shifts in agency mindset and practice with no legislative policy change or increased funding allocation, the total number of youth in care across all five cohort jurisdictions decreased by 29 percent, the total number of youth in residential care decreased by 39 percent, and the total number of children removed from their families was reduced by 31 percent, with no child deaths or egregious incidences.

The Movement for Family Power works to "end the foster system's policing and punishment of families and to create a world where the dignity and integrity of all families is valued and supported." Through conferences and reports and planning and advocacy campaigns, the Movement builds community with and among people working to shrink the foster care system, raises social consciousness around the harms of the foster care system in order to reclaim and reimagine safe and healthy families, and disrupts and curtails foster care system pipelines to reduce the harm inflicted by family separation.

Example: A More Perfect Union Parent Cafés

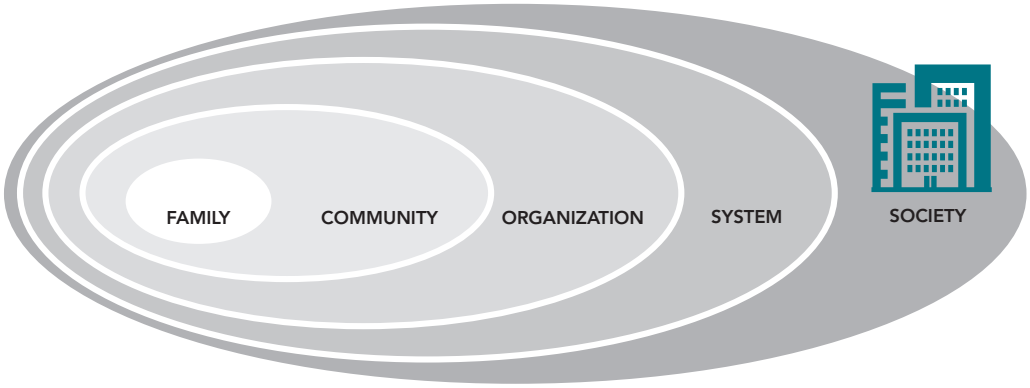
Be Strong Families (BSF) adapted the Parent Café model (one approach to structured peer-to-peer conversations) to offer parents and caregivers an opportunity to connect, learn, and get support from each other on racial justice issues.

A More Perfect Union Parent Cafés began in 2016 because BSF wanted to respond to how many African American parents were feeling about the racism they were experiencing in their day-to-day lives. Leadership realized that what the organization does best—develop transformative conversations—could allow people to experience the emotional safety needed to share their feelings, gain support from each other, and brainstorm strategies and solutions to keep their families safe.

What emerged was a realization and a tool: When people have a safe space to connect across differences, they develop compassion for and understanding of other peoples' realities, disrupt stereotypes, and create stronger ties to each other. A More Perfect Union Parent Cafés, organized around the protective factors, honor the broader context for parenting in a complex and often unjust world and help parents and caregivers positively and proactively navigate this landscape.

CHAPTER TWO

Creating a More Supportive Society for All Families



The societal level of the social-ecological model provides the context for all other layers. It describes the climate within which systems, organizations, and communities operate and individual families live their lives. When that climate is supportive of parents and children, it is easier for all families to thrive. Two societal factors that play a significant role in how we can effectively support all families and prevent child abuse and neglect are (1) social and cultural norms about parenting and receiving help and (2) Federal, State, and local policies that promote financial security.

IN THIS CHAPTER:

Social and cultural norms are (often unspoken) rules or expectations for how we behave; they are based on shared beliefs within a specific group. In the same way that a protective factors approach focuses on building family strengths, Positive Community Norms approaches focus on increasing healthy attitudes and behaviors rather than decreasing negative ones. The power of positive community norms can be harnessed to strengthen

protective factors within families by promoting **norms that encourage and destigmatize families seeking help when needed.** Examples could include promoting messages such as, "We all share responsibility for the well-being of children," and, "All parents need support sometimes. It's okay to ask for help."

Research increasingly shows that **policies addressing household financial security** are effective in reducing child abuse and neglect. When parents are financially secure, it is easier for them to provide for their children's basic needs, offer safe and nurturing care, and experience good physical and mental health themselves. Communities can foster well-being by making it easier for families to access available concrete supports—such as income and employment support, low-income tax credits, nutrition assistance, health care, safe and stable housing, and affordable high-quality child care—and advocating for these resources where they are limited or do not exist.

Equity is an important consideration when looking at the societal context for families. We know that all families do not share the same experience of our society, and the policies and outcomes of our current systems are often unequal and unjust. The examples in this chapter demonstrate an awareness that meaningful change requires a commitment to dismantle attitudes, policies, and practices that perpetuate inequality and interfere with families' ability to care for their children. This means changing how we personally view, engage, and work with families—including the assumptions we make about them and how we respond when they experience progress and setbacks—as well as shifting from a norm of family surveillance to one of social and economic support.

"By addressing the living and working conditions of families, you not only get at the root causes of inequities in risk for violence and other health outcomes, you can also increase the effectiveness of behavioral interventions. It's not an either/or option. You're likely to increase the success rate for people who participate in parenting programs if they're not also worried about where their next meal is coming from, housing instability, or being able to get time off work to participate."

—Marilyn Metzler, senior analyst, Health Equity, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Division of Violence Prevention

FEDERAL FOCUS: CDC ESSENTIALS FOR CHILDHOOD

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has long been a leader in Federal efforts to support families and prevent child abuse and neglect at the societal level. CDC's Essentials for Childhood framework outlines strategies to help create a society in which every child can thrive.

Changing norms and policies are two parts of the Essentials for Childhood framework. The full framework has four goals and suggests evidence-based strategies to achieve each goal:

Goal 1: Raise awareness and commitment to promote safe, stable, and nurturing relationships and environments for all children.

Goal 2: Use data to inform actions.

Goal 3: Create the context for healthy children and families through norms change and programs.

Goal 4: Create the context for healthy children and families through policies.

For example, the **North Carolina** Task Force on Essentials for Childhood is working toward goal 4 by funding grants to support several partners in encouraging family-friendly workplace policies. One of the grantees, Family Forward NC, is an employer-led initiative to increase access to research-based, family-friendly practices—big and small—that support children's healthy development. It offers resources for employees, including information about family-supportive Federal and State laws and a directory of family-friendly workplaces and the benefits they offer. Family Forward NC also offers an extensive online guide that can be used to develop (or advocate for) family-friendly workplace policies.

For more information about other Essentials for Childhood projects and resources on norms and policy change, see the CDC's Essentials for Childhood webpage and the guide to the framework, *Essentials for Childhood: Creating Safe, Stable, Nurturing Relationships and Environments for All Children*.

CHANGING NORMS ABOUT PARENTING: FROM SURVEILLANCE TO SUPPORT

At the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, many experts predicted that the increased stress on families, and their decreased visibility to professional mandated reporters such as teachers, would cause child abuse and neglect rates to climb. Instead, researchers Robert Sege and Allison Stephens assert that rates of child physical abuse appeared to fall significantly during 2020. As evidence, they note a dramatic decrease in child protective services (CPS) reports (up to 70 percent in some States), as well as a decline in emergency department visits and hospitalizations for suspected child abuse and neglect.[4] According to *Child Maltreatment 2021*, the number of child abuse and neglect victims reported by State child welfare systems and the national estimated number of

[4] Sege, R., & Stephens, A. (2022). Child physical abuse did not increase during the pandemic. *JAMA Pediatrics, 176*(4), 338–340. https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/34928320/; Chaiyachati, B. H. et al. (2022). Emergency department child abuse evaluations during COVID-19: A multicenter study. *Pediatrics*, *150*(1). https://publications.aap.org/pediatrics/article/150/1/e2022056284/188279/Emergency-Department-Child-Abuse-Evaluations; Maassel, N. L., Asnes, A. G., Leventhal, J. M., & Solomon, D. G. (2021). Hospital admissions for abusive head trauma at children's hospitals during COVID-19. *Pediatrics*, *148*(1). https://publications.aap.org/pediatrics/article/148/1/e2021050361/179710/Hospital-Admissions-for-Abusive-Head-Trauma-at; Barboza, G. E., Schiamberg, L. B., & Pachl, L. (2021). A spatiotemporal analysis of the impact of COVID-19 on child abuse and neglect in the city of Los Angeles, California. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, *116*(Pt 2). https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7494263/

child abuse and neglect fatalities both decreased from federal fiscal year (FFY) 2019 to FFY 2021.

A survey of parents about their experiences during the pandemic, conducted by the American Academy of Pediatrics, in collaboration with the CDC, Prevent Child Abuse America, and Tufts Medical Center, offers some potential explanations for this decline. Although many families did experience job losses and increased financial stress, they also had access to support in the form of enhanced unemployment assistance, stimulus payments, and eviction moratoriums. Rather than creating more risk, more family time together was positively associated with better family mental health.

This is not to say that harmful abuse and neglect should not be reported—it absolutely should. However, nearly half (46 percent) of reports currently are "screened out" (meaning what is being reported does not meet the statutory definition of abuse or neglect). Among reports that are screened in, only 16 percent are substantiated. At best, this means most families reported to CPS will receive no services as a result. At worst, an investigation can cause additional stress and harm, including long-term impacts on a parent's employment and income, in a family that may already be vulnerable.

Even more problematic, families of color have an increased risk of child welfare involvement due to increased surveillance and overreporting, resulting in racial inequity within child protection systems. Research in 20 large U.S. counties found that the percentage of children experiencing a CPS investigation before the age of 18 was highest for Black children, in some cases as high as 50 to 60 percent. Focus groups with mandated reporters sometimes show that they know what they are reporting does not meet the standard of abuse or intentional neglect; they report because they are concerned about a family that needs help and feel they have no other option.[5]

Changing societal norms to promote seeking and accessing supports can help. Through public awareness campaigns, policy changes, and trusted messengers, we can raise people's awareness of misconceptions about what brings families to the attention of CPS and influence communities to try new family support strategies. For example, changing norms around mandated reporting is a good place to start—emphasizing instead society's common responsibility to provide help for struggling families before they're in crisis. Please see the information on page 12 under Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention to learn how one jurisdiction has developed a "Mandatory Supporter Training."

Many communities are working to normalize seeking and accessing help through increased partnerships, including with families, and expanding their service array to develop a comprehensive continuum of supports and resources to prevent child maltreatment. Family resource centers (FRCs) are one way to provide a wide range of supports to meet families' diverse needs. Family resource or support centers offer universal services and are often guided and staffed by members of the communities they serve, making for a welcoming, culturally responsive space. Another example are "warmlines" or "helplines," which provide an alternative to CPS hotlines for mandated reporters, the general public, or families seeking additional support. Warmlines can offer families voluntary help by connecting them with a wider range of resources and supports, including food, clothing, housing, medical and behavioral health-care services, education-related resources, legal representation, transportation, child care, or even ongoing support through a home visiting program.

[5] "Risk and safety assessment 201: How issues of race, equity and diversity impact risk and safety assessment." [Webinar]. https://www.childwelfare.gov/more-tools-resources/mm/webinars/riskseries/assessment101/

Many States have been expanding their continuum of services by developing a title IV-E prevention services plan (as authorized by the Family First Prevention Services Act [FFPSA], Public Law 115-123). FFPSA changes the funding structure for the child welfare system and offers opportunities for States to receive title IV-E reimbursement to fund some mental health, substance use disorder, and in-home parent skills-based programs to help prevent entry into foster care. As a result, States are able to use the title IV-E prevention program to complement the other Children's Bureau grants outlined in this guide, as well as other family support and prevention services to support families across their continuum of needs.

To be effective, supports for families must be developed with the awareness that different groups within the same community may have very different cultural norms around seeking or accepting help. Undocumented individuals and communities of color, for example, have good reason to be wary of supports offered by the same government agencies that have historically oversurveilled their neighborhoods. Universal supports that are available to all families convey the message that no one is "targeted" and anyone can seek help. Supports that are recommended by trusted members of the community—including neighbors and religious leaders—may be more readily accepted.

Shifting to Primary Prevention to Decrease Overreporting of Families of Color

Philadelphia, PA, has the highest poverty rate of any major U.S. city. It also has one of the highest rates of children entering and spending time in out-of-home care. An internal study[6] conducted by Philadelphia's Office of Children and Families confirmed a relationship between neighborhood-level poverty and reporting to Philadelphia's child abuse and neglect hotline.

Specifically, neighborhoods with the highest rates of hotline reports had five times the proportion of children living in poverty, half the median household income, and three times the unemployment rate of neighborhoods with the lowest reporting. In fact, four in five reports to the hotline concerned neglect, which is often related to poverty, and 93 percent of children reported to the hotline did not require a formal child protective safety service. It was clear that poverty-related issues such as child care burdens, utility shut-offs, and food insecurity were far reaching in Philadelphia and that the city's hotline was being used to inappropriately report instances of poverty as maltreatment.

This inappropriate use of the hotline disproportionately harms Black families. Although only 42 percent of Philadelphia's children are Black, they represent 66 percent of children reported to the hotline. At the community level, this trend is consistent. Neighborhoods with the most reports to the hotline are the same historically Black neighborhoods that were redlined and experienced decades of residential segregation and lack of public- and private-

[6] City of Philadelphia Department of Human Services, Office of Children and Families. (2020). *Entry rate and disproportionality study: Phase one*. [Unpublished]. To learn more, visit "Risk and safety assessment 201: How issues of race, equity and diversity impact risk and safety assessment." [Webinar]. https://www.childwelfare.gov/more-tools-resources/mm/webinars/riskseries/assessment101/

sector investments. This, in turn, leads to persistent poverty and surveillance by child-serving systems.

In fall 2021, Philadelphia's Department of Human Services (DHS) was awarded an FSPP grant from the Children's Bureau. Philadelphia is using its FSPP grant to focus on building equity and addressing structural racism within city systems. The city's strategy has three components:

- Modifying and supplementing the State's mandated reporter training to encourage a culture of support rather than surveillance.
- Streamlining connections to services, benefits, and concrete goods for families diverted from formal DHS involvement and living in areas of the city with the most reports to DHS.
- Expanding Philadelphia's health department's existing Philly Families CAN (PF CAN) referral line. PF CAN was originally developed to connect families with children up to age 3 with voluntary home visiting services based on their eligibility and interests.

The FSPP grant funds will allow the Philadelphia DHS to expand the PF CAN support line. The goal is a universal service for families with children up to age 17, connecting them with housing and social, emotional, and behavioral health supports. The service will expand connections with community service providers that are outside of the formal child welfare system.

This effort will be supported by an existing PF CAN community group composed of parents who have previously interacted with Philadelphia agencies. The group's guidance will continue to shape the implementation of the grant activities.

Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention

Wyoming Children's Trust Fund

Wyoming Children's Trust Fund (WYCTF) developed a mandatory supporter training that combines information about Wyoming's mandatory reporting laws with an emphasis on the protective factors and the importance of referring families in need of support to local resources. Since early 2021, 1,500 participants from more than 200 Wyoming organizations have attended the training and are implementing this approach.

In addition, a Wyoming Prevention Campaign released in 2022 includes video and audio clips capturing parents' experiences of seeking prevention services in Wyoming. The campaign focuses on normalizing seeking help and the importance of building protective factors.

ADVANCING FAMILY FINANCIAL SECURITY THROUGH POLICY

We know that poverty has a significant impact on family stability and that the burden of poverty falls inequitably on communities of color due to both historical and current structural barriers. The majority of families who live in poverty do not abuse or neglect their children. However, families who are poor are overrepresented in the (much smaller) population of people reported to CPS agencies for maltreatment.

Research increasingly shows that policies that improve financial security in households with children decrease neglect reports, physical abuse, and child welfare involvement. That's why providing concrete supports to families is recognized as a protective factor in preventing child maltreatment.

Economic and other concrete supports improve parents' ability to provide for their children's basic needs, help caregivers secure appropriate child care, and reduce stress and depression. They may also reduce household crowding and increase housing stability.

Temporary changes to the Child Tax Credit in 2021 had a significant impact on child poverty. According to the Columbia University Center on Poverty and Social Policy, while in effect the tax credit reduced monthly child poverty by 30 percent and kept more than 3 million children out of poverty. Other studies have shown a connection between increases in earned income tax credits and decreases in CPS reports and child welfare system involvement.

Other financial security policy strategies that have been found to decrease maltreatment and child welfare involvement include the following:

- Expanding Medicaid coverage
- Allowing mothers on TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) to receive child support without a decrease in benefits
- Mandating a living minimum wage
- Offering affordable and subsidized child care
- Increasing access to safe, affordable housing

Those working directly with families can support child well-being by becoming familiar with the programs and benefits to which families are entitled and the procedures for accessing them. Direct-services staff can also help agency leaders understand the barriers that families encounter when trying to access these supports and what systems changes might be needed.

Agency leaders and community coalitions may be in a position to educate legislators and inform positive policy and systems changes that improve the environments within which families are raising their children. For example, jurisdictions could improve access to some of the benefits listed above by simplifying application processes, making applications available online and in a variety of languages, offering flexible service hours, reducing barriers to eligibility as permitted by law, and providing prioritized access to families at risk of separation or involvement with the child protection system.

Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention

Children Trust Michigan

Children Trust Michigan is involved in a 3-year project with the University of Michigan and the Office of Minority Health researching how access to the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) could reduce child maltreatment, poverty, and adverse childhood experiences (ACEs).

The EITC Access Project provides community education statewide to destigmatize receipt of EITC and help caregivers understand who is eligible and how to apply. Flyers and informational materials are culturally appropriate and translated into languages that make sense for the communities being served, including Spanish, Arabic, and Burmese. Additional languages, such as French, are in the process of being included to respond to community needs.

In nine counties, the program also offers one-on-one financial empowerment training within existing Parents as Teachers home visiting programs. Home visitors use motivational interviewing techniques to assess eligibility and help caregivers schedule and attend meetings with tax preparation volunteers.

Questions to Consider

CHAPTER 2

The following are questions to consider about social norms and policies supporting household financial security. They were designed to be used for reflection about direct practice with families and as a starting point for conversations within community groups, agencies, or jurisdictions.

Questions to Consider When Providing Services to Families:

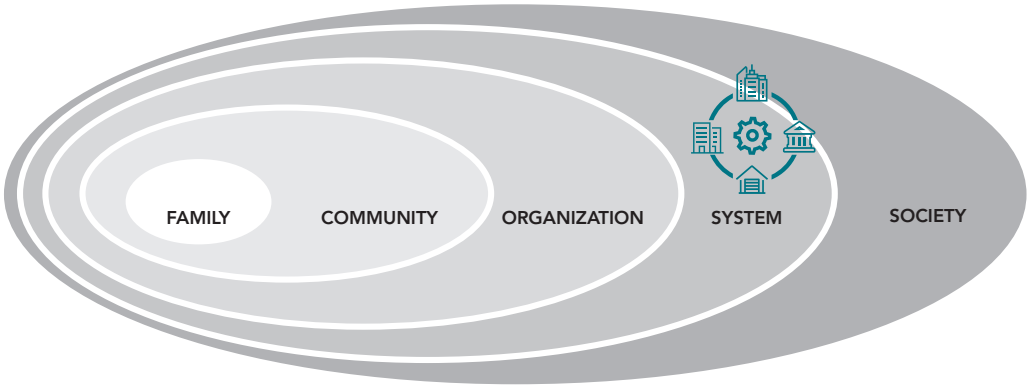
- How are our biases showing up in our policies, practices, and decision-making? How do they impact our engagement with families?
- Have we asked the families we work with how they feel about receiving help? Where and how do they prefer to receive help, and what makes asking for it easier?
- What benefits and services to support household financial security are available in the community? What role can we play in helping families gain access to those benefits?

Questions to Consider in Collaboration With Community and Agency Partners:

- How could we assess the **social and cultural norms** around parenting, supporting families, and seeking help in our community?
  - How could we begin to shift our community norms from a focus on mandated *reporting* to mandated *supporting*?
  - How might social and cultural norms around parenting and asking for help affect how our offers of support are received?
  - How are families involved in the design, development, and implementation of programs and practice?
- Which evidence-based policies identified by the Essentials for Childhood framework are currently in place within our jurisdiction?
  - What do data tell us about which policies are working well for children and families? Which policies might need to change to enable all families to thrive?
  - How are we engaging and listening to families in our policy analysis and change efforts?
  - What policies are currently in place to address historic and systemic inequities in our community? Is diversity (e.g., race, ethnicity, gender, language, geography) represented in leadership positions guiding the development and implementation of policies that impact children and families?

CHAPTER THREE

Building Proactive Child and Family Well-Being Systems



The system level of the social-ecological model concerns the social, political, and physical environments within which parenting occurs. Increasingly, communities are embracing a move from traditional child protection systems that surveil families and react to reports of child maltreatment to systems designed to proactively support child and family well-being and prevent family separation.

Effective prevention systems require collaboration among community partners from all sectors—most importantly, persons with lived expertise in the systems they are seeking to change. These partners work together to prioritize equity, reallocate resources, and deliver a continuum of community-based supports that meet families' unique needs and promote the conditions that help them thrive.

IN THIS CHAPTER:

Child and family well-being systems are grounded in the **analysis of multiple sources of data** to identify the underlying strengths and needs of the local community: Which groups of people have been marginalized and in what ways? Which specific needs are most prevalent? Are community assets and resources accessible in the communities with the greatest needs?

Collective data analysis can help build a strong sense of shared responsibility and commitment to a common goal. Some communities also employ a framework of **collective impact**, a structured form of collaboration that brings together partners committed to solving a specific social problem. These communities increasingly center equity as they seek to optimize the health and well-being of children and families by aligning their actions to change systems.

Another hallmark of a child and family well-being system is the use of **primary prevention strategies** to promote the skills, strengths, and supports that all parents need to keep their children safe and thriving. These efforts are available to support all families and prevent harm before it occurs. They include strategies such as home visiting and FRCs, which are embedded in the community and offer parents and caregivers a variety of formal and informal supports. Primary prevention strategies are generally less expensive and less intrusive in the lives of families than child welfare system involvement and entering foster care.

The examples in this chapter demonstrate some of the ways collective approaches to family support can be grounded in equity, data, and evidence of what works.

FEDERAL FOCUS: CHILD SAFETY FORWARD INITIATIVE

The U.S. Department of Justice, Office for Victims of Crime, is funding a 4-year demonstration initiative across five sites to reduce child abuse and neglect fatalities and injuries through a collaborative, community-based approach. Based on recommendations from the Commission to Eliminate Child Abuse and Neglect Fatalities (CECANF), and with support from a technical assistance team from Social Current, sites are identifying, implementing, and evaluating equitable strategies to support families and prevent harm to children.

Each of the five sites is implementing CECANF's vision of reducing serious injuries and preventing fatalities in its own way, but they have coalesced around the following three core conditions they believe are needed to achieve impact: (1) elevating families into relationships of power within systems; (2) building intentional strategies to systematically assess and address racism; and (3) creating a sustained communications strategy.

The Child Safety Forward team from Hartford, CT, established a Parent Engagement Work Group that reviewed data the site collected showing racial disparities in child maltreatment reports and unsafe sleep. The workgroup questioned why that data had not previously been shared with the community and were motivated to work with the Hartford team to create a comprehensive educational guide for families to increase child safety and well-being, noting that, as the ones closest to the problem, their place was at the table to develop solutions.

More information on these and other strategies developed by Child Safety Forward sites can be found on the Social Current website.

Community Collaborations to Strengthen and Preserve Families

Nebraska Children and Families Foundation

The Nebraska Children and Families Foundation (Nebraska Children) works to build strong communities that support families so their children can grow up to be successful, productive adults. It employs an equity-centered collective-impact approach to support local prevention systems throughout the State. In 2018, Nebraska Children received a Community Collaborations to Strengthen and Preserve Families grant to work with the Douglas County Community Response Collaborative (DCCR) to further develop its prevention system. One goal was to address the disproportionate involvement of certain communities, most notably Native American families, within the child welfare system.

DCCR is a child and family well-being system that was chartered in 2015 and has a membership of more than 35 organizations. It provides coordinated services to parents and caregivers throughout pregnancy and until children reach the age of 16, with the goal of promoting protective factors and preventing maltreatment.

Recent efforts in Douglas County supported by this grant include the following:

- Developing a work plan to increase alignment across DCCR activities with an intentional focus on equity and partnering with individuals with lived experience
- Hosting DCCR's first Race Equity Retreat, including codesigning next steps toward systemwide equity
- Hiring a Community Café collaborative associate to implement parent-hosted Community Cafés

With additional funding from the Pritzker Foundation, DCCR is also codesigning and cocreating an enhanced home visiting plan with individuals with lived experience. A Promoting Equity Group was established to prevent common pitfalls of working with individuals with lived experience, including tokenism, with best practices such as intentional onboarding and trust building.

USING COMMUNITY DATA TO PREVENT CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

Data are the foundation of a public health approach. Robust, integrated, multisystemic data help communities understand the nature and extent of family risk and protective factors, map community assets, effectively direct prevention resources, and monitor the progress and impact of chosen interventions.

The following are a few of the many ways to enhance the use of community-level data in child abuse prevention efforts:

- **Support and expand the practice of data sharing among organizations serving children, youth, and families,** including the courts, child welfare services, law enforcement, mental health and substance use disorder services, and other systems, to better identify and serve families in need of support *before* a crisis occurs. Data-sharing efforts should consider issues of confidentiality, common data elements, the integration of different information systems, and other factors.
- **Review and present data with a racial equity lens,** including consistently disaggregating data by race and ethnicity. When disparity or disproportionality is revealed, explore structural causes to avoid perpetuating group stereotypes.
- **Explore ethical uses of predictive analytics,** which is the use of past data to predict what will happen in the future. Such approaches, when used mindfully, may improve the accuracy of decision-making and help ensure scarce resources reach those who need them most. However, predictive analytics must be used with caution. Without ethical oversight and careful attention to data quality, child welfare agencies risk interpreting results inaccurately and exacerbating racism and disparities. Many experts agree that predictive analytics are most useful when data support (rather than supplant) human judgment and when systems are implemented with community transparency and input.
- **Use data mapping,** which employs geographic information systems to visualize specific demographic information along geographic boundaries. For example, researchers can look at the correlation between poverty rates or other demographic data and reports of child abuse in neighborhoods to begin to understand where additional resources may be needed or why certain areas have higher rates of foster care.
- **Track the well-being of children and families over time.** Data can help monitor the progress of individual prevention strategies, assess how well they are working, and inform where changes are needed to improve outcomes. Some communities are exploring the development of community-level safety and well-being indicators to provide similar information about the success of their collaborative efforts.
- **Include lived experience experts in data analysis.** Individuals who have been impacted by child welfare can shed new light on and provide critical context for data. They also can help ensure that data are presented in ways that are easily grasped by all, including collaborative partners who are not as familiar with research and child welfare. When interpreted and analyzed together, data can serve as the foundation of a stronger roadmap for collective efforts.

Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention

Arkansas Children's Trust Fund

The Arkansas Children's Trust Fund within the State's Division of Children and Family Services (DCFS) worked with Predict-Align-Prevent to complete an analysis of child maltreatment risk in Little Rock, the State's most populous city. The project mapped past maltreatment, child and adult deaths, crime, and other risk factors associated with maltreatment, as well as protective factors such as child care centers, churches, and home visiting programs. The resulting maps clearly demonstrate that child abuse and neglect rates are high in areas of the city that also have high rates of other poor outcomes, providing a powerful visualization of community needs.

The next step will be to align resources where they can have the greatest impact. For example, the analysis showed that 53 percent of all preventable child deaths in Little Rock occurred in the 15 percent of the city where child maltreatment risk is highest. Furthermore, almost all child maltreatment fatalities occurred in the two highest-risk areas of the city. These insights have helped the city develop a data-driven strategic plan to more precisely target primary prevention services and funding to the areas where they are needed most.

DCFS convened an advisory board of State and local partners to review the data. Members of this group represent a cross-section of organizations related to children and family services, including early childhood education programs, the Little Rock school district, city of Little Rock employees, domestic violence shelters, homeless shelters, the local children's hospital, substance use treatment providers, and many more. Predict-Align-Prevent also invited input from local faith leaders and worked with a team at the University of Arkansas to conduct focus groups with community members of high-risk areas. The advisory board assisted DCFS in conducting an environmental scan to identify the programs already serving children and families in high-need areas and pinpoint any gaps.

Once the analysis and environmental scans are completed, the advisory board will recommend evidence-based strategies to address identified risk factors and promote more protective factors for families. These recommendations will serve as a blueprint for securing and deploying new resources as they become available.

CENTERING EQUITY IN COLLECTIVE IMPACT APPROACHES TO FAMILY SUPPORT

Collective impact has long been recognized as an effective strategy for organizing diverse, multidisciplinary teams in pursuit of a common goal, such as preventing child maltreatment and increasing protective factors within families. Collective impact differs from collaboration in that it involves structured, systemic attention to the relationships between organizations and how they work together.

Collective impact is commonly identified by five essential conditions:

- **Common agenda,** including a shared vision for child and family well-being, a common understanding of the challenges families face, and a joint approach to promoting supportive environments and increasing protective factors within families

- **Shared measurement systems,** with agreement on how child abuse prevention and family well-being will be measured and reported for accountability
- **Mutually reinforcing activities** undertaken by participants in ways that support and coordinate with other partners within an overarching plan
- **Continuous communication** among partners to develop trust and a common vocabulary
- **Backbone support** provided by a separate organization and staff with specific skills in facilitation, technology, communications, data collection and reporting, and logistics

A 2022 article in the *Stanford Social Innovation Review* refines the definition of collective impact further. More than a decade of observation and study has revealed that **centering equity** is the most important element of successful collective impact efforts. Therefore, the authors propose a revised definition of collective impact as "a network of community members, organizations, and institutions that advances equity by learning together, aligning, and integrating their actions to achieve population and systems-level change."

Collective impact efforts that center equity utilize five strategies:

- Ground the work in data and context, and target solutions.
- Focus on systems change, in addition to programs and services.
- Shift power within the collaborative.
- Listen to and act with community.
- Build equity leadership and accountability.

A critical element of this is meaningful engagement and leadership of youth, caregivers, and other community members. Without intentional community engagement and involvement, proposed solutions may not be appropriate, acceptable, or compatible with community needs, and changes may reinforce existing inequitable power structures.

Agencies focused on child and family well-being and child abuse prevention may well find that their goals are consistent with a community group that is already employing a collective impact approach. If not, they might consider starting such a group.

To find more information, visit the Collective Impact Forum.

"Without explicitly articulating the work to center equity and making space to do that work, collective impact efforts will fall short in their potential to dismantle long-standing inequities, repair historical injustices, and advance better outcomes for those who have been left behind."

—John Kania, Junious Williams, Paul Schmitz, Sheri Brady, Mark Kramer, & Jennifer Splansky Juster in the *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, Winter 2022[7]

[7] Kania, J., Williams, J., Schmitz, P., Brady, S., Kramer, M., & Juster, J. S. (2022). "Centering equity in collective impact." *Stanford Social Innovation Review.* https://ssir.org/articles/entry/centering_equity_in_collective_impact

Community Resilience Provides a Positive Focus for Collective Efforts to Address Adverse Environments

Child and family adversity, including child abuse and neglect, is often more prevalent in communities where decades of inequity have resulted in concentrated poverty, unstable or insecure housing, overpolicing, and other structural barriers.

The "Pair of ACEs Tree" graphic, created by the Center for Community Resilience (CCR), illustrates this as a relationship between ACEs and adverse community environments. In other words, it is difficult to change the outcomes (represented in the graphic as the branches of the tree) without addressing their systemic roots.

Ellis, W., Dietz, W.H., Chen, K.D. (2022). Community Resilience: A Dynamic Model for Public Health 3.0. Journal of Public Health Management and Practice, (28)1, S18-S26. doi: 10.1097/PHH.0000000000001413

A second graphic shows, by contrast, how equitable and trauma-responsive systems support the elements of community resilience, including safe and stable neighborhoods, social and economic mobility, and healthy and supported individuals and families.

CCR uses these graphics and other tools to engage multisector groups of collaborators in developing policy goals that better address the forms of adversity rooted in inequitable systems and communities.

CCR's approach is based on four central components applied as a continuous improvement model:

1. Creating a shared understanding of childhood and community adversity
2. Assessing system readiness
3. Developing cross-sector partnerships
4. Engaging families and residents in a collaborative response to prevent and address the pair of ACEs

More information is available on the Center for Community Resilience website.

> *"By asking the question, 'What's in your soil?,' communities can begin to set goals and implement policy and practice change that builds community resilience."*
>
> —Wendy Ellis, Dr.P.H., M.P.H., director, Center for Community Resilience at the Milken Institute School of Public Health at George Washington University

IMPLEMENTING COMMUNITYWIDE PRIMARY PREVENTION STRATEGIES

No family should be expected to raise their children completely alone, without support. All parents can benefit from a temporary "boost"—someone to listen and offer advice; a place to go for respite and social connection; or help with rent, child care, or transportation. These supports, whether formal or informal, are primary prevention strategies that strengthen the environment within which all families—regardless of race, income, or creed—raise their children.

Promising and successful primary prevention programs include services and resources that have the following characteristics:

- Available to anyone who lives in the community, not just to families deemed to be at risk
- Offered on a voluntary basis
- Place based and centrally located within the communities where families live, ensuring easy accessibility
- Aligned with community values, norms, and culture
- Offered by public, nonprofit, faith-based, or private providers that are independent of the government
- Focused on enhancing parental protective factors
- Inclusive of concrete supports (e.g., limited financial assistance, food assistance, housing assistance, legal services, respite, or child care), clinical services, and peer mentoring
- Provided through braided funding that may include Federal, State, county, city, and private dollars[8]

[8] U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Children's Bureau. (2018). *Strengthening families through primary prevention of child maltreatment and unnecessary parent-child separation (ACYF-CB-IM-18-05)*.

For example, FRCs exist in a variety of community settings, including school buildings, libraries, hospitals, housing projects, libraries, restored buildings, and new structures.[9] Their services are generally voluntary, free, and offered to any parent who wants to participate. The offerings are often chosen and designed by the center's members and in partnership with local community leaders. Some FRCs are now leveraging American Rescue Plan funds to further expand services to families.

Many of these characteristics serve to support positive community norms (see page 9) around seeking and accepting help. They create an environment where the need to ask for help is not viewed as a threat to the family's integrity. In this context, participating in services to prevent problems from arising or becoming worse is viewed as a strength rather than a weakness.

Universal Home Visiting Builds Family Protective Factors

Home visiting is a service-delivery model employed in many communities to offer support to parents. When it is offered to all families in the service area, regardless of socioeconomic status or risk factors, it is considered a "universal" program and a primary prevention strategy.

Home visiting programs can target a wide variety of family health and well-being outcomes, including reduced child maltreatment, increased protective factors, better prenatal and postnatal health for mothers and babies, increased use of positive parenting strategies, and enhanced connection of families to other supports and services in the community.

A number of evidence-based home visiting models have been developed. Many of these models provide specialized support to parents and children in high-priority families, such as families with low incomes or young parents, or to individuals serving in the military. However, others take a universal, primary prevention approach. Examples of these programs include the following:

- Family Connects, developed in Durham, NC
- Welcome Baby, Los Angeles, CA
- Hello Baby, Allegheny County, PA
- First Born, NM

In these models, nurse visitors or parent coaches work with all families who accept a visit to identify what supports they want and need. If further support is desired, home visitors provide an individualized, stigma-free entry point into the community's system of care through referrals to other, more intensive home visiting programs, income and housing support, and health and social services.

"Primary prevention addresses one simple question: How can we be more proactive in helping to strengthen the protective capacities of families and keep them safe and healthy? The goal of primary prevention is to help all families thrive."

—Deborah Daro, Ph.D., senior research fellow, Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago

[9] Child Welfare Information Gateway. Family resource centers. [Webpage]. https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/preventing/prevention-programs/familyresource/

For example, Family Connects is an evidence-based program (EBP) that connects all parents of newborns in the service area, regardless of socioeconomic status, to the community resources they need through postpartum nurse home visits. The model was first piloted in Durham, NC, in 2008.

Randomized controlled trials have shown that Family Connects strengthens the following protective factors during the first 6 months of a child's life:

- Parental resilience: Mothers were 30 percent less likely to report postpartum depression or anxiety.
- Knowledge of parenting and child development: Mothers reported significantly more positive parenting behaviors, such as hugging, comforting, and reading to their infants.
- Nurturing and attachment: Mothers expressed increased responsivity to, and acceptance of, their infants.
- Concrete supports: Home environments were improved, with homes being safer and having more learning materials to support infant development.
- Social connections: Connections to community resources and services increased.

In one trial, families who participated had 44-percent fewer investigations for suspected child abuse and neglect through the second year of life, compared with similar families that did not participate. These families maintained a 39-percent reduction in child maltreatment investigations though age 5.

Questions to Consider

CHAPTER 3

The following are questions to consider as you build more supportive systems for children and families. They were designed to be used for reflection about direct practice with families and as a starting point for conversations within community groups, agencies, or jurisdictions.

Questions to Consider When Providing Services to Families:

- How do we regularly consider the impact of adverse community environments on the families we work with?
- How do we partner with families as the experts about what resources and supports already exist in their community? How can we connect the families we work with to additional voluntary community-based supports, if they identify a need?
- Do all needed supports and interventions exist in our community? If not, where can families seek them out?

Questions to Consider in Collaboration With Community and Agency Partners:

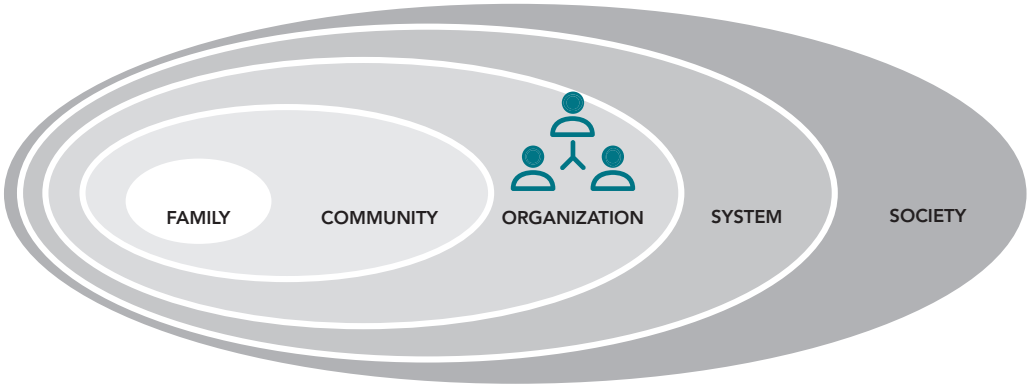
- What **sources of data** could help us better understand families' strengths and needs at a population level?
  - What prevents or impedes data sharing in our community? Who could help us address these barriers?
  - How might our community benefit from the use of predictive analytics or data mapping? (Check out Casey Family Programs' free, interactive Community Opportunity Map.)
  - What do the data show about the outcomes that different races and ethnicities experience from systems, policies, and programs? If disparities are present, which policies or practices (present and historical) have contributed most to those differences?
  - How can we increasingly employ people with diverse and lived expertise to collect and analyze data?

- What **collaborations** already exist in our community to help families and children thrive? How can we contribute? (Consider lending your voice and skills to an existing collaboration before starting a new one, if possible. Places to look for collaborators with similar goals include the areas of public health, early childhood education, and violence prevention.)
  - What sectors are currently represented in our collaborative groups? Which are missing or underrepresented? Have we reached out to philanthropic partners, the business community, and faith communities?
  - How are we engaging or inviting the voices and leadership of community members and persons with lived expertise in our efforts?
  - If we are not currently using collective impact, how could that model provide a helpful structure for our efforts?

- What are the **primary prevention** strategies in our community? How can we strengthen those supports to help all families thrive?
  - What evidence-based or evidence-supported child maltreatment prevention strategies are currently available to all families in our community? Which could be expanded? Where are the gaps?
  - How could our community normalize seeking and receiving support by families? Which families are more likely to engage in family support and prevention services and why? What steps do we need to take to ensure a more universal approach to engaging all families in prevention services?

CHAPTER FOUR

Aligning Organizations for Family Resilience and Healing



The third level of our social-ecological model recognizes that organizations can and often must make changes to their own programs and policies to better align with communitywide prevention approaches and more effectively build protective capacities within families.

The well-being of children cannot be separated from the well-being of their families and communities. When we support caregivers and other adults, in addition to providing services directly to children, we naturally enhance well-being and help prevent child abuse and neglect (along with other poor outcomes). This is often described as taking a **"two-generation (2Gen) approach" or a "whole-family approach."** 2Gen approaches build family well-being by intentionally and simultaneously working with children and the adults in their lives together.

IN THIS CHAPTER:

In working with the whole family, it is important to recognize how trauma can impact children and their caregivers. Research has shown that exposure to ACEs—including domestic violence, parental incarceration, mental illness, and substance use—can have lifelong health impacts. These experiences within families are often exacerbated by adverse community factors such as inequity, discrimination, and violence. Recent discoveries in neuroscience demonstrate that a prolonged, unresolved "toxic" stress response triggered by ACEs and other traumatic experiences can physiologically alter the structure of the brain, particularly in the absence of a nurturing adult to help the child process the experience and feel safe.

Becoming more **trauma responsive and healing centered** helps organizations and systems meet parents and caregivers where they are and support them in building capacity to protect and nurture their children. Becoming more trauma responsive can also help organizations better understand and support their own staff, many of whom have personal trauma histories and/or are exposed to secondary traumatic stress (STS) through their day-to-day work with families.

Research is now identifying **positive childhood experiences** (PCEs) that may reduce the long-term effects of ACEs. These findings underscore the importance of focusing on the critical early relationships between children and their caregivers, while also suggesting evidence-informed ways to build resilience for children into adolescence. We know that changes in the brain continue to occur at key periods throughout our lifetimes. Healing is possible at any age, and there is always room for hope. Understanding the factors that support well-being, including protective factors and other PCEs, helps organizations develop and maintain a positive focus.

This chapter highlights examples of strategies that value children's families and culture, recognize and address the effects of trauma on both families and their own workforce, and promote PCEs to build resilience in the next generation.

EMPLOYING TWO-GENERATION APPROACHES TO STRENGTHEN FAMILIES

Image courtesy of Ascend at the Aspen Institute

The protective factors framework has long recognized the interdependence of child and family well-being, noting the importance of parental resilience, concrete supports, and social connections to the prevention of child abuse and neglect. However, many human services organizations still offer support in exclusively a child-focused *or* parent-focused way. 2Gen approaches build family well-being by intentionally and simultaneously working with children *and* the adults in their lives.

For example, at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, many jurisdictions faced a choice in how to respond to a sudden decline in child protection hotline calls and accompanying concerns about child safety. Some took a strictly child safety-focused approach by

alerting mandatory reporters to stay mindful and ensuring they understood when and how to report safety concerns. Others took a 2Gen approach, working collectively with their communities to promote both child safety *and* family well-being by implementing warmlines (call centers for nonemergency support) and helping families to access services and resources, such as concrete supports (e.g., help with housing, food, child care, other economic assistance), behavioral health services for adults and children, testing and treatment for COVID-related illness, child care for essential workers, and other service referrals.

Research shows that supporting children and their caregivers together through a 2Gen approach yields the following benefits for generations:[10]

- A college degree doubles a parent's income.
- A $3,000 increase in family income during early childhood is associated with a 17-percent increase in a child's future earnings as an adult.
- High-quality early childhood education increases future school and career achievement, and reduces social costs, yielding a 14-percent return on investment.
- Parents with health insurance are more likely to seek care for their children.

There are five key components of the 2Gen approach: postsecondary education and employment pathways, early childhood education and development, economic assets, health and well-being, and social capital. For child-focused programs (e.g., early childhood development programs), embracing a 2Gen approach means building in supports for caregivers, such as parenting skills training, family literacy, and health screening. Similarly, for caregiver-focused programs (e.g., workforce education), it means incorporating child-focused supports such as early learning or food and nutrition programs.

2Gen approaches are ultimately measured by how well they meet the needs of the whole family. However, not all organizations can serve the needs of both children and the adults in their lives. In many cases, taking a 2Gen approach may require connecting with other organizations in your community to ensure that the communitywide system of care supports the full continuum of child and caregiver needs.

[10] Ascend, Aspen Institute. *Advancing family economic mobility. A 2Gen approach.*

The Kickapoo Tribe of Kansas focuses on the role of culture in building and sustaining strong families. Revitalizing the Kickapoo language, which had nearly died out, is a core strategy being used to connect Tribal members across generations.

The Tribe recently developed a set of three board books that were provided to every enrolled family with young children. The board books teach the Kickapoo words for colors, numbers, and animals, using beautiful illustrations that reflect the Tribe's culture (e.g., its traditional homes, water ways, buffalo herd).

The books provide an opportunity for bonding between children and their older family members as they read together, while supporting the whole family in connecting with their cultural identity to foster well-being. This strategy is part of a larger language revitalization effort that also includes the creation and distribution of a deck of playing cards with cultural designs, as well as revival of traditional sports and more formal language instruction.

Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention

Texas Prevention and Early Intervention Division

The Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI) Division of the Texas Department of Family Protective Services launched the Fatherhood EFFECT (Educating Fathers for Empowering Children Tomorrow) program in 2015. Fatherhood EFFECT, which is supported with CBCAP funding, encourages healthy father engagement through evidence-based programs in seven communities across the State.

Fathers and father figures most frequently join the free parent education program to gain tools to be the best dad they can be to support their child. However, once there they also enjoy personal support from facilitators and fellow participants. The listening and positive regard from program facilitators, in particular, contrasts with negative interactions fathers frequently report having with other social programs, where they may feel excluded or devalued.

The Child and Family Research Partnership (now the Prenatal-to-3 Policy Impact Center) evaluated the success of the Fatherhood EFFECT program through a mixed-methods approach. The evaluation noted that participants felt the facilitator support and connections to other community resources were as valuable to them as the parenting curriculum. In 2020, PEI expanded Fatherhood EFFECT's scope to include collaborating with community coalitions, encouraging other family-serving organizations to increase the quality of supports targeted specifically for fathers, and pivoting to explicitly include and support fathers across multiple programs in an organization or community.

PEI worked with the Prenatal-to-3 Policy Impact Center to create and publish a fatherhood website called the Fatherhood Resource Hub. The website recognizes the important role fathers play in the lives of their children, families, and communities. Resources include research on father involvement, tools to help family-serving organizations with their efforts to serve fathers, and tools for communities such as how to build a fatherhood coalition.

PEI also sponsors localized annual Fatherhood Summits. In 2022, five Fatherhood EFFECT grant recipients held summits to mobilize the community around the importance of fathers, amplify father voices, and offer unique community events, including father-child and family-oriented activities.

Ascend at the Aspen Institute Offers a Roadmap for a 2Gen Approach

Ascend at the Aspen Institute is a hub for breakthrough ideas and collaborations that move children and their parents toward educational success and economic security using a 2Gen approach.

Ascend outlines a continuum that many organizations progress through as they deepen their 2Gen and whole-family work:

- **Approach:** A 2Gen approach first requires a new mindset for designing programs and policies that serve children and parents simultaneously. This often begins with culture-change initiatives, training, and professional development to help staff reenvision services and supports for families.
- **Strategy:** In the next phase, organizations begin aligning and coordinating services with other community partners to meet the needs of all family members. Piloting new approaches to services also occurs during the strategy phase.
- **Organization:** In the third phase, organizations provide services to both children and the adults in their lives simultaneously, tracking outcomes for both.

The Ascend National Network includes more than 470 partners active in all 50 States, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Ireland, Rwanda, and Guatemala. There are a number of case studies and resources to advance 2Gen approaches available on the Ascend website.

> *"The birth of a child is a time of biological and neurological change, not just for infants but also for their primary caregivers. If you reach a parent at just the right moment, they are often much more open, ready, and motivated to access education or job training because they want to provide for their kids."*
>
> —Anne Mosle, vice president, Aspen Institute, founder and executive director, Ascend at the Aspen Institute

FEDERAL FOCUS: NATIONAL CHILD TRAUMATIC STRESS NETWORK

The National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN) was created by Congress in 2000 to raise the standard of care and increase access to services for children and families who experience or witness traumatic events. This unique network of direct-service providers, family members, researchers, and national partners is committed to changing the course of children's lives by improving their care and moving scientific gains quickly into practice across the United States. NCTSN is administered by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and coordinated by the University of California, Los Angeles-Duke University National Center for Child Traumatic Stress (NCCTS).

The NCTSN Trauma-Informed Organizational Assessment is a tool to help organizations assess their current practices in the context of serving children and families who have experienced trauma. Results from the assessment can drive change to facilitate the recovery of the child and family, maximize physical and psychological safety, provide for the needs and well-being of staff, and support the child's and family's ability to thrive. Created by NCCTS, the assessment is arranged by domains and maps onto the NCTSN definition of a trauma-informed child and family service system.

The following domains are included in the assessment:

- Trauma screening
- Assessment, care planning, and treatment
- Workforce development
- Strengthening resilience and protective factors
- Addressing parent and caregiver trauma
- Continuity of care and cross-system collaboration
- Addressing, reducing, and treating STS
- Partnering with youth and families
- Addressing the intersections of culture, race, and trauma

The assessment will contribute to the body of evidence around the importance of being trauma informed. If you are interested in using this tool, please contact TIOA@nctsn.org.

Another example of a tool funded by NCTSN is the Intermountain Healthcare (Utah) care process model, *Diagnosis and Management of Traumatic Stress in Pediatric Patients*. The guide cites the high prevalence of traumatic experiences and their disproportionate impact on children of color and poor health and mental health outcomes as the reasons for developing the guide. It offers best-practice recommendations for primary care and children's advocacy center settings, age-appropriate screening tools and road maps for care, and specific guidance for immediate in-office interventions for specific trauma symptoms. Care providers are urged to follow up with children and families at regular intervals.

When the **Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community** recognized that its social services programs were seeing recurring struggles in multiple generations of the same families, the Tribal Council undertook a new initiative to become better informed as a community about historical and intergenerational trauma.

They began with focus groups, an organizational survey, and interviews with staff in three departments (social services, the family advocacy center, and health and human services) that encounter many of the same families. All staff, as well as all members of the Tribal Council, received training on trauma, historical trauma, and developing a healthy racial and ethnic identity.

The community's behavioral health services and family advocacy center now employ trauma-trained therapists who offer evidence-based, culturally responsive treatment. They use the Medicine Wheel, familiar to many American Indian/Alaska Native people, to explain the impact of trauma on families and encourage healing. The Department of Social Services created the Circles of Support program, which accepts referrals from multiple Tribal departments, including education, to identify and wrap services around families at risk before they reach a crisis. When a crisis does occur and CPS are needed, a trauma-response team provides advocacy and support to the family involved.

IMPLEMENTING TRAUMA-INFORMED AND TRAUMA-RESPONSIVE CARE FOR CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES

According to NCTSN, a trauma-informed child and family services system is one in which all parties involved recognize and respond to the impact of traumatic stress on those who have contact with the system, including children, caregivers, and service providers. Programs and agencies within such a system infuse and sustain trauma awareness, knowledge, and skills into their organizational cultures, practices, and policies. They collaborate with all those who are involved with the child, drawing on the latest research findings to maximize physical and psychological safety, facilitate the recovery of the child and family, and support their ability to thrive.

Agencies and programs within such a system regularly screen children and families for trauma exposure and provide or refer to evidence-based, culturally responsive treatment for symptoms of traumatic stress. They also engage in efforts to strengthen resilience and protective factors for children and families vulnerable to trauma.

The following are characteristics of trauma-informed and responsive organizations:

- **Understand that families play an important role in preventing and recovering from trauma.** Carrying out rituals and traditions, sharing memories and feelings, and working together to solve problems, manage stress, and plan for the future are all ways that families can weather a traumatic event and grow stronger together.
- **Acknowledge that all families experience trauma differently.** Many factors, including a child's age and the family's culture or ethnicity, may influence how a family copes and recovers from trauma. Trauma-informed and trauma-responsive systems acknowledge structural inequalities and respond to the unique needs of diverse communities with cultural awareness and humility. Even within families, different members may have different reactions to the same event.
- **Encourage partnership among families, youth, and providers.** Such partnerships benefit from both professional expertise and personal experiences to achieve more successful and meaningful outcomes that are codefined by all members of the relationship. True partnerships require mutual respect and shared responsibility for planning, selecting, and evaluating services and supports.
- **Attend to staff trauma and STS.** When individuals hear about the traumatic experiences of others, they can experience empathetic emotional distress. Exposure to clients' trauma may also activate trauma triggers from the staff member's own past. These experiences can lead to symptoms of STS, which is common among helping professionals. Unaddressed, STS can negatively affect staff's professional and personal lives. Organizations can address STS through supervisory support, training, and policies that encourage self-care (e.g., flex time, caseload management).

> *"When you have a workforce that understands what trauma is, the impact of it, and what they can do about it in their role, and when they feel supported and have some skills to help them cope with their own emotions and trauma history, then you have a staff who can engage, connect, and be compassionate with families. In simple terms, that's what it's all about."*
>
> —Jane Halladay Goldman, director of service systems, NCTSN

Developing a Culture of Wellness

Washington, DC's, Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA) is creating a wellness culture within its agency to prevent and address STS among its workforce. This effort is a partnership between agency leadership and its human resources administration, and it is overseen by staff in the newly created health and wellness coordinator roles.

An STS workgroup composed of agency staff at all levels from each of CFSA's five administrations was formed to regularly gather information about employee STS and wellness and develop and revise agency policy in response. The workgroup supports deep culture-change initiatives, training and education for staff at all levels, and peer support opportunities. All business practices that may create or exacerbate STS are being addressed, including recruitment, interviewing, onboarding, and exiting processes. The group also increased employee access to ongoing therapeutic support by institutionalizing the role of an STS expert.

In addition, CFSA created a Wellness Works program to support a culture of wellness throughout the agency. Wellness Works targets three areas: healthy choices, recognition and support, and employee engagement. The wellness program is supported onsite with a well-equipped gymnasium, access to balance ball chairs and treadmill desks, blood pressure machines, and a meditation room. Activities to support remote workers have included "color days" to promote a feeling of unity, a virtual wellness expo, financial wellness workshops, and midday virtual wellness activities.

UNDERSTANDING THE PROTECTIVE EFFECTS OF POSITIVE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES

In the same way that protective factors balance our understanding of risk factors, it is important to understand how *positive* experiences, as well as adverse ones, influence brain development. Research has begun to explore the ways in which PCEs—including supportive environments and strong relationships with family and peers—help promote healthy child development and build resilience to adversity. Adding these findings to the body of research around ACEs provides useful insight into how families, communities, and organizations can help children thrive.

The Wisconsin Behavioral Risk Factor Survey examined the impact of seven PCEs:

- Feeling able to talk to family members about feelings
- Feeling that family stood by them during difficult times
- Enjoying participating in community traditions
- Feeling a sense of belonging in high school
- Feeling supported by friends

- Having at least two nonparent adults who took genuine interest in them
- Feeling safe and protected by an adult in their home

An analysis of the data demonstrated that, compared with people with none of the PCEs included in the study, those who had six or seven PCEs had a 72-percent lower chance of having depression or poor mental health. Adults with three to five PCEs experienced a 50-percent reduction in the odds of adult depression. The analysis also found that, although risk and resources are unequally distributed in our society, the effect of positive experiences to mitigate poor health outcomes was similarly strong for all income groups. These findings led the researchers to conclude that PCEs can protect children from developing toxic stress in the face of adversity and help them heal.

Agencies and staff working directly with families can use this information, alongside a protective factors framework, to support families and adolescents in creating more opportunities for these PCEs.

The HOPE Framework: Building Child-Level Protective Factors

The **HOPE (Healthy Outcomes From Positive Experiences) framework** combines insights from a public health approach to preventing child maltreatment with a broader understanding of how children grow to become strong, healthy, and resilient adults. HOPE focuses on the buffering effects of PCEs and builds on preexisting strengths in children and families.

A corollary to the CDC's community-level approach to emphasizing safe, stable, and nurturing relationships and environments, the HOPE framework focuses on the individual child level. It echoes and builds upon the protective factors framework.

The tenets of the HOPE framework were derived by looking for common elements among successful programs that help children and adolescents. The framework developers identified four building blocks for HOPE:

- **Nurturing and supportive relationships** with peers, parents, and adults outside the family. In early childhood, the secure attachments that children form with affectionate and responsive parents create the template for all their future relationships. As kids grow up, peer relationships and romantic relationships become more important.
- **Safe and stable environments.** We know that children need protective and equitable places to develop, learn, and play. Positive environments support stable housing, adequate nutrition and sleep, high-quality learning and play, and access to high-quality medical and dental care. When communities provide these spaces, kids can thrive.

Image courtesy of HOPE (Healthy Outcomes from Positive Experiences)

- **Constructive engagement and social connectedness.** We all need to know that we matter to other people and to our communities. That starts when children are given responsibilities for family chores. Older children and teenagers benefit from opportunities to volunteer in their communities and participate in their school activities, faith communities, and cultural traditions.
- **Opportunities to develop social and emotional intelligence** through playing and learning with peers and collaboration in art, drama, and music. Social and emotional competencies like self-awareness and self-regulation are key to lifelong resilience and social support as adults.

The Children's Bureau Learning and Coordination Center offers a training module called *Transforming Experience Through HOPE*, which is grounded in the work of the HOPE National Resource Center.

Creating Trauma-Responsive Organizational Cultures

Community-based organizations, including schools, FRCs, and shelters, interact with children and families every day, yet their staff may receive minimal training on the impact of trauma or the building blocks for well-being. In addition, staff in human services are more likely than the general public to have experienced trauma in their own lives, including financial stress and racial trauma as well as secondary traumatic stress.[11] This trauma, if unaddressed, can "snowball" into organization-wide problems such as decreased efficiency, job dissatisfaction, and high rates of absenteeism and turnover.

Massachusetts aims to address these concerns through its Center on Child Wellbeing and Trauma. The center is a partnership of the Massachusetts Office of the Child Advocate and Commonwealth Medicine, a division of the University of Massachusetts Chan Medical School. Launched in 2021, it supports child-serving organizations in multiple disciplines to

[11] See for example Bryce, I., Pye, D., Beccaria, G., McIlveen, P., & Du Preez, J. (2021). A systematic literature review of the career choice of helping professionals who have experienced cumulative harm as a result of adverse childhood experiences. *Trauma, Violence, and Abuse.* https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/15248380211016016

"We need to see the people we interact with in a more complete way than we can with ACEs screening alone. Adversity is not destiny—science shows that many people who suffered quite a bit turn out okay. We can use that knowledge to help people so they don't feel that they're doomed or damaged in some way because they've had adversity. And we can begin to identify specific things that parents can do to help promote resilience as their children grow up."

—Robert Sege, M.D., Ph.D., professor, Tufts University School of Medicine

become more trauma informed and responsive, using a three-pronged approach:

- The center's website provides information on ACEs as well as PCEs that enhance well-being (the latter includes resources developed by HOPE). It also offers a variety of resources, toolkits, and training materials.
- The center develops professional learning communities within State agencies and community-based organizations focused on topics the organizations select (for example, ACEs and PCEs, trauma, and reflective supervision).
- The center uses NCTSN's Trauma-Informed Organizational Assessment to assess where select organizations are in their journey to becoming more trauma responsive and provides follow-up coaching in areas targeted for growth.

The center is focused on changing organizational culture at a high level, based on a belief that when organizations and systems are trauma responsive, they can better support both their workforce and the families they serve.

> *"The magic of learning about positive childhood experiences is that it gives organizations a positive place to go with strategies so the learning about trauma can be partnered with hopeful interventions."*
>
> —Audrey Smolkin, executive director, Center on Child Wellbeing and Trauma

Questions to Consider

CHAPTER 4

The following are questions to consider as you align your work with a whole-family, trauma-responsive approach to child abuse prevention. They were designed to be used for reflection about direct practice with families and as a starting point for conversations within community groups, agencies, or jurisdictions.

Questions to Consider When Providing Services to Families:

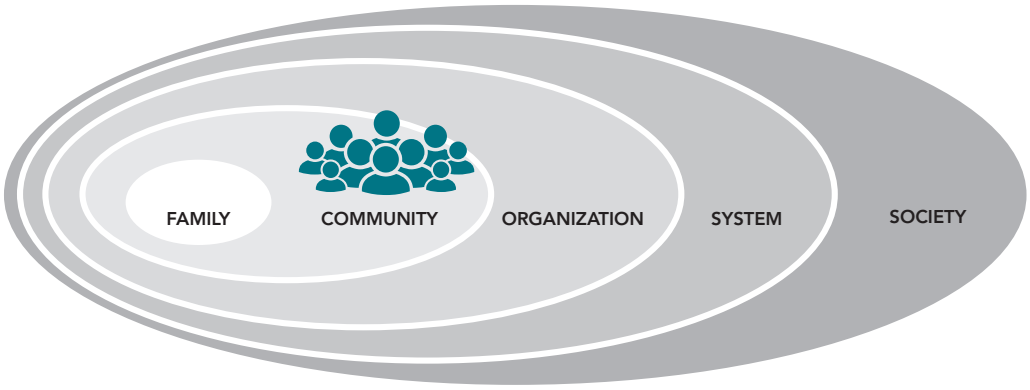
- Which partner agencies in the community provide services that could complement those we provide, to ensure that every family member's needs are met?
- What trainings have direct-services staff received in trauma-responsive care? How does the recognition of trauma, including historical and racial trauma, inform our practice with children, youth, and families?
- Are all staff aware of how the experiences of families may trigger our own trauma histories? How do we care for ourselves, including seeking support when needed?
- How might an awareness of PCEs change our work with families? Which PCEs can we help families create for their children and youth?

Questions to Consider Within Your Organization and in Collaboration With Community and Agency Partners:

- Are our organizations and/or partnerships more parent focused or child focused, or do we take a **2Gen approach**?
  - How could we partner with other organizations to enhance the range of supports for all members of the families we serve?
  - How could our organization move toward a 2Gen approach? If we provide child-focused services, how might we supplement with services for parents, or vice versa?
- In what areas has our organization become **trauma informed and responsive**? (See the list of domains in NCTSN's self- assessment, referenced on page 34.) What are some opportunities for growth?
  - What are the roots of trauma in our communities? In what areas has our organization become involved in preventing trauma? Are there times when our organization may further traumatize children or families?
  - How does our agency recognize the role of race, culture, ethnicity, and inequality in family and caregiver experiences of trauma and healing?
  - How does our agency partner with families and youth in planning, selecting, and evaluating trauma-responsive and healing-centered services and supports?
  - How do our agency's training, supervision, and policies help to prevent and address STS among our workforce?
- How might we create or support **PCEs** through our programming and outreach?

CHAPTER FIVE

Embracing Community and the Wisdom of Families With Lived Experience



The fourth level of the social-ecological model highlights the spaces where child abuse prevention and family support agencies interact and engage with the communities they serve. Family and community members with lived experience offer a unique perspective that, when embraced, can improve family engagement, increase the effectiveness of services, and ultimately change systems in ways that promote equity and reduce harm.

IN THIS CHAPTER:

We know that, despite our best efforts, child welfare systems continue to disproportionately intrude on families living in poverty and families of color, who generally have very little power or voice in a system that affects the most intimate aspects of their lives. Their involvement with the system too often results in additional trauma, instead of healing. Although direct-services providers are on the front lines of work with families, the burden of this legacy cannot fall on their shoulders alone. Direct-services providers, agency administrators, and community leaders alike must commit to new ways of listening to the wisdom of children, youth, and families with lived experience and developing meaningful partnerships with the communities they serve.

Families are best positioned to know their own strengths, be familiar with the natural supports available in their neighborhoods, understand the challenges they face, and propose innovative solutions. Effective systems value people's knowledge and observations about their own lived experience, their strengths and needs, and community capacities and seek to share power equitably.

Meaningful and authentic partnership with families and community members with lived experience goes far beyond seeking their input on initiatives or having them represented on committees or in meetings. It means giving parents, caregivers, and youth the opportunity to be heard and to actively contribute to all decisions that affect their lives at all levels of policy, research, and practice. It also means soliciting and using the perceptions, experiences, and recommendations of those with lived expertise to inform system-level improvements. Utilizing and integrating family, youth, and community voice in all aspects of decision-making is a strengths-based approach that can increase engagement. Parents, caregivers, and youth should be compensated for their expertise and provided with whatever support is needed to enable their full involvement. This support is key to preparing those with lived expertise to be successful serving in a broad range of roles.

The strategies and examples highlighted in this chapter show the multitude of ways to tap into the tremendous wisdom and strength present in our communities, align our efforts with those of community leaders, and provide real opportunities that enhance the inherent strengths and leadership abilities of caregivers and youth. Doing so will benefit organizations, families, and the overall community as we are all stronger when we work together toward a shared goal.

> *"'Seat at the table' is a phrase that is often used, but as parents we would rather our voices be heard at the table and not just be offered a 'seat.'"*
>
> —Mrs. Vadonna Williams, FRIENDS Parent Advisory Council

FEDERAL FOCUS: HEAD START/EARLY HEAD START POLICY COUNCILS

Head Start and Early Head Start are national models of early care and education with strong foundations in family engagement and community partnership. The founders of Head Start viewed parents as essential partners in the agency's work to educate young children and ensure their health and well-being. They believed that parents receiving Head Start services should help decide how those services could most benefit their family and other families in the community.

As a result, Head Start created a formal leadership and policymaking role for parents and community members, referred to in Head Start/Early Head Start programs as a "policy council." Today, every Head Start and Early Head Start agency is required to have a policy council as part of its shared leadership structure. The Head Start Program Performance Standards describe what policy councils do and who can be a member.

Policy council members make decisions about how the program operates and give important input related to program funding and human resources, for example. Parents who serve on the council receive training and support to ensure they are prepared to make those decisions. Serving on the policy council strengthens parents' leadership and advocacy skills as well as their connections to their peers and the community.

Head Start offers a number of useful policy council resources for both organizations and parents.

GROWING AUTHENTIC PARTNERSHIPS WITH PARENTS, CAREGIVERS, AND YOUTH

Today's human services leaders are recognizing that opportunities for meaningful engagement with current and past program recipients extend far beyond soliciting input, inviting representation at meetings, or hosting panel presentations at conferences. Parents, caregivers, and youth can play meaningful roles in all areas, including but not limited to the following:

- Strategic sharing of their lived experience
- Codesigning, selecting, and improving programs
- Developing practice models and standards
- Ensuring greater attention to the diverse cultural interests of families
- Providing direct services, such as through parent partner programs
- Participating in governance and hiring personnel
- Setting organizational policy
- Establishing research agendas, gathering data, and interpreting findings
- Helping with publications and messaging
- Educating policymakers and leading systems-change efforts
- Making funding decisions
- Advising and engaging in community collaboratives

The Children's Trust Fund Alliance (CTFA) outlines four stages of building and sustaining effective parent partnerships (Similar strategies can apply to partnerships with other caregivers and/or youth.):

1. **Strong partnerships begin with self-reflection.** Before engaging parents, caregivers, or youth, organizational leaders are encouraged to reflect on why the partnership is important; what strengths

family members offer; what the organization can offer in return; and what benefits they hope to achieve for themselves, their programs, their organization, and the families they serve.

2. **Partnerships support participation in a variety of forms.** When parents, caregivers, and youth can contribute to a program in a way that builds on their unique strengths, it respects their voice and their culture, encourages their participation, and supports opportunities for growth.
3. **Partnerships link organizations to community.** Parent, caregiver, and youth partners can be strong allies in carrying the mission and messaging of an organization or program to the broader community. This can help build credibility and trust with other families. Many parents and youth who come to the attention of a program director are already established leaders in their own communities. It is easier to build relationships if these community leaders feel their culture is respected and see the direct benefits their work with you can have in their own community.
4. **Partnerships invite people with lived experience to mentor others.** It is important to have more than one or two partners with lived experience—and to continually cultivate new lived experience leaders—so that the organization can benefit from diverse perspectives and individuals are not overextended. With support and encouragement, experienced parents, caregivers, and youth can become involved in State-level project design, grant reviews, policy development, hiring activities, and interagency activities. The best way to ensure a continuum of partnerships with people with lived experience is to create a wide variety of activities and encourage current partners and leaders to invite others to participate.

CTFA's website offers useful resources on partnering with parents. FRIENDS National Center for Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention also offers a guidebook for meaningful parent leadership and parent-practitioner collaboration.

> *"Prevention begins with authentic relationships in the community and with parents. The Birth Parent National Network seeks to push our country forward by elevating the voices of parents and organizations that are bold enough to scream, 'Parents aren't broken!' We see parents as treasured leaders—wise and filled with hope. I encourage all to continue mining for gold, not digging for dirt. There's a nugget inside of all of us. If you can't find it, you're not looking hard enough."*
>
> —Corey Best, member, Birth Parent National Network, founder, Mining for Gold

Community Collaborations to Strengthen and Preserve Families

Parents and Children Together-St. Louis (MO)

Parents and Children Together-St. Louis (PACT-STL) is a 5-year initiative funded by the Children's Bureau in 2019 through a Community Collaborations to Strengthen and Preserve Families grant. The project aims to reduce entries into foster care by linking families to the services they need before stressors become crises. PACT-STL maintains a strong commitment to centering the voices of parents with lived experience in all aspects of the project.

PACT-STL uses a parent-facilitated café model to encourage dialogue about the community's most pressing issues and concerns. Gatherings include traditional parent cafés and dad cafés that focus on building the protective factors within families, as well as vitality cafés (focused on individual growth and well-being) and community cafés (focused on positive community change). Participant outcomes include improved communication skills, increased patience with children, and strengthened community support and connection.

When PACT-STL began to see a decline in participation in its café offerings, it turned to its Parent and Youth Advisory Council (PYAC) for insight. Open to all parents and caregivers who have experience with the child protection system, PYAC provides feedback on proposed activities, identifies systemic changes needed to better serve families, and helps promote PACT-STL activities. This group identified several strategies that were implemented in 2022 to increase café engagement, including more flexible scheduling, the use of social media and ambassadors to recruit participants, and a hybrid networking model.

PACT-STL is committed to supporting the growth and development of all community leaders and advocates. They offer frequent training opportunities to both parents and caregivers and service providers on topics such as Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services Standards, Parent Café Training Institutes, and Advocacy 101. In addition, the collaborative that is responsible for overseeing all PACT-STL activities must draw at least 10 percent of its members from PYAC to ensure that parents with lived experience are represented at all levels of PACT-STL.

SHARING POWER WITH COMMUNITIES

Successful prevention program implementation and assessment require a deep understanding of the communities you hope to serve. That means not only extending invitations but listening to and incorporating input from community leaders. This can best be achieved by attending to power dynamics and seeking ways to share power more equitably. Consider taking the following actions:

- **Make meaningful community engagement a priority.** Community engagement should not be limited to consultation on specific issues or campaigns. Seek opportunities to solicit and use the perceptions, experiences, and recommendations of community members to make systems-level improvements and to use their input in making critical decisions that affect their lives.
- **Partner "content experts"** (those with expertise about child abuse prevention and family support) **with "context experts"** (those with lived experience in the community) early and continuously. Value the knowledge and experience of both.
- **Implement culturally relevant EBPs.** Implemented well, EBPs can increase the likelihood of positive outcomes and satisfy funders who increasingly require this approach. However, it is important for selected practices to be effective for the targeted community. This requires the involvement of the community in identifying, assessing, and implementing strategies that are both supported by scientific research and consistent with the community's culture and values.
- **Recognize promising practices.** Where possible, consider implementing or partnering with practices and services that are highly valued within the community but may lack the resources to establish a robust level of evidence required to meet EBP standards.
- **Engage community members in designing and completing program evaluations.** Community voice should help drive the questions asked and the criteria for determining whether a program is successful.
- **Seek out grassroots organizers.** Grassroots organizations are often more flexible in their use of funds, and organizers typically have a different view of and relationship with the community than service providers.
- **Compensate community experts and provide meaningful leadership opportunities.** Offering compensation and opportunities for growth, in addition to a "seat at the table," shows you value the community and builds trust.
- **Hire staff that represent the community.** Ideally, this should include people with lived experience but at minimum it should include those who reflect the community served in race, ethnicity, and culture.
- **Be present in the communities you serve.** The more you live, play, and show up in the community you serve, the more the people of that community will trust you. Shop, recreate, and attend community and school events to break down artificial barriers.
- **Be flexible in engagement strategies and with expected outcomes.** Youth and families don't exist in the 9-to-5 world. If you want to share power, being accessible at times convenient for them is a must. Let go of what you think that engagement and power sharing are "supposed" to look like. Often what occurs is not what was expected, but it may be even better.

- **Be open to transformative change—truly doing things differently.** Transformation is more likely when meaningful community engagement occurs because community members may be less attached to the status quo.[12] Organizations and systems will benefit most from community engagement when they do their best to engage diverse members of the community, actively seek out new and different perspectives, and are willing to engage in difficult conversations.

Dear Leaders: Establishing Trust to Support Meaningful Cocreation

"Cocreation" or codesign is a participatory process of designing programs, services, and systems in which community members with lived expertise *collaborate equally with program leaders and staff*.

Agencies that wish to engage parents, youth, and community members in codesign efforts often face a common challenge—a lack of trust. In 2021, Alia convened a group of lived experts and child welfare leaders in a human-centered design process facilitated by the global design and innovation company IDEO to help child welfare systems connect with communities as they rebuild after COVID-19. The how-to guide to community codesign became a how-to guide for systems to become more trustworthy partners. The result is *Dear Leaders*.

Dear Leaders is a resource designed to help systems create the conditions for bringing family voice and power to the system by guiding leaders and workers in systems to listen deeply without agenda, recognize harm, plan for accountability, and communicate with transparency. *Dear Leaders* comprises a set of theme-based discussion prompts and activities and is organized into five principles:

- **Context** centers on truth and reconciliation, which requires leaning into this work from a place of humility and acknowledgement of harm done. It asks leaders to reflect on their role in the system and use that as a starting point for change.
- **Compassion** prioritizes psychological safety and well-being to support the human and emotional needs of leaders, staff, and families.
- **Change** requires personal and professional development in new ways. Change-oriented leaders reflect on the power they hold as individuals and the areas they need to grow to nurture their teams and their community.
- **Consistency** centers around follow up and follow through and talking less and doing more. Consistent leaders are brave in the face of discomfort and affirm their commitment by taking action despite challenges that stand in their way.
- **Collaboration** is about sharing power and creating ways to actively amplify and design with people with lived experience—without tokenizing them. Collaborative leaders strive to build relationships of mutuality and solidarity with their teams, families, and those impacted by the system to move the work forward.

You can find more information or download the tool on the Alia website.

[12] Smart, J. (2017). Critiques of collective impact: Need for policy and systems change. In: *Collective impact: Evidence and implications for practice*. CFCA Paper No. 45. Child Family Community Australia.

Community Collaborations to Strengthen and Preserve Families

Promoting Equity Through Community Engaged Research (Larimer County, CO)

Supported Families, Stronger Community (SFSC) is a 5-year interagency effort led by the Larimer County (CO) Department of Human Services, supported by a Community Collaborations to Strengthen and Preserve Families grant. The project relies on families as experts and utilizes a care coordination and system navigation model to help families develop and improve protective factors, increase support networks, and gain access to needed services and supports.

Community voices are at the center of the evaluation plan. For example, the evaluation team identified, engaged, and compensated an individual with lived expertise to serve on the evaluation team with specific responsibilities for qualitative data collection and analysis. The community consultant's perspectives also informed the instrument development, recruitment, and facilitation of interviews and focus groups. SFSC participants were offered multiple, flexible ways to participate in these data-collection activities, and they also were compensated for their time. As a result, family participation in the initiative has been enhanced.

Community-based participatory research methods are prioritized in every aspect of the evaluation. The evaluation team maintains open communication with implementation partners, including the community navigators who bring lived expertise to their roles, to ensure programming is driven by family needs, not metrics. A continuous quality improvement group of community partners helps the team cocreate easily digestible data visualizations that are contextualized within broader initiative goals and accessible to a wide audience. This is important because it allows the evaluation team to interpret data in partnership with community. This opens the process to new perspectives, questions, and challenges and promotes more effective power sharing. Considerations brought forth by community partners have impacted significant aspects of the initiative's implementation, including the decision to expand eligibility criteria from 2 county ZIP codes to all 28 county ZIP codes.

Family Support Through Primary Prevention

Ohio Children's Trust Fund

Ohio Children's Trust Fund (OCTF) received an FSPP grant in September 2021 to support cross-sector approaches to primary prevention at the State and local levels. Leaders from multiple State departments come together regularly to discuss how families are experiencing State systems and explore strategies that can be tested in county demonstration sites.

Intentional engagement of people with lived experience has been central to Ohio's approach. The State cross-sector group has a trichair structure that includes a representative from OCTF, one from the Governor's Children's Initiative, and a parent representative. In one of its earliest meetings, the group participated in a full-day retreat facilitated by Alia, drawing from the *Dear Leaders* toolkit (as previously described on page 48).

OCTF has been laying the groundwork for a high level of parent leadership for several years, through the creation of regional prevention councils and implementation of a parent advocacy training throughout the State. Providers and parents complete the training in pairs and then work together to train other parent and provider teams to advocate effectively for change within public systems. Ohio is also working to create a centralized lived-experience advisory council at the State level that would be charged with lifting up the perspectives and recommendations of various local and regional groups.

Questions to Consider

CHAPTER 5

The following are questions to consider as your organization enhances its partnerships and power sharing with people with lived expertise. They were designed to be used for reflection about direct practice with families and as a starting point for conversations within community groups, agencies, or jurisdictions.

Questions to Consider When Providing Services to Families:

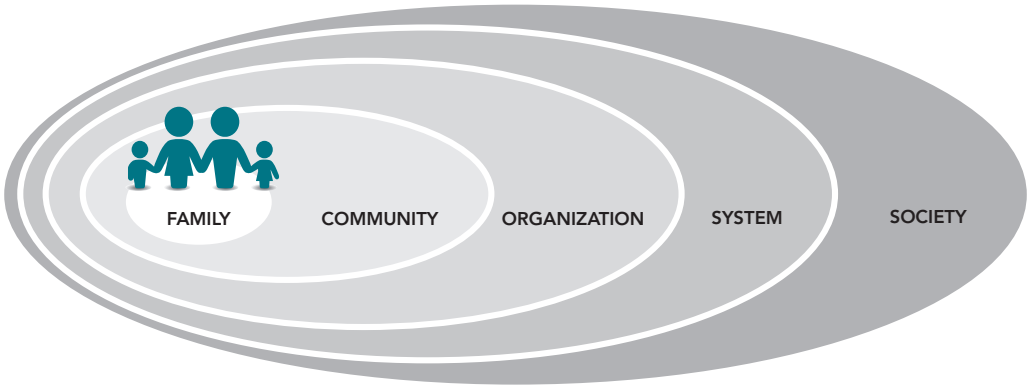
- How might personal biases affect the way that staff interact with families? How could we learn more about our implicit biases?
- Do direct-services staff actively live in the communities they serve? If not, where are there opportunities to get involved or connected to activities in those communities outside of work?
- In our work with families, how do we seek out and demonstrate respect for the wisdom of their cultural and community leaders?
- Do direct-services staff know about opportunities to promote the voice and leadership of parents, caregivers, and youth in our agency or the communities we serve? How could we help create those opportunities if they do not exist?

Questions to Consider About Organizational Culture:

- How does our organization demonstrate that we value and incorporate **parent, caregiver, and youth voices**?
  - Does our organization have a parent or youth advisory council? If not, is our leadership open to starting one?
  - Are parents, caregivers, and youth offered a variety of meaningful ways to contribute their perceptions, experiences, and recommendations at all levels of planning and decision-making (according to their strengths and skills)? Are they compensated for their time and offered training for leadership roles?
- How does our organization demonstrate that we value **community voice?**
  - Does our organization seek out and compensate community members for their expertise?
  - How are community members, especially in communities negatively impacted by racial inequality, meaningfully involved in the creation, implementation, and evaluation of programs and policies that affect their lives?
  - Does the composition of our staff reflect the communities we serve?

CHAPTER SIX

Protective Factors Conversation Guides for Partnering With Families



The innermost layer of the social-ecological model represents ways that we can support individual families in protecting their children and helping them thrive. The conversation guides in this chapter were created to help you engage parents and caregivers in personalized, constructive conversations about how the protective factors contribute to positive outcomes for families. Each guide targets one of the six factors:

- Nurturing and Attachment: "We love each other"
- Knowledge of Parenting: "I can choose what works best for my children"
- Parental Resilience: "I deserve self-care"
- Social Connections: "We are connected"
- Concrete Support for Families: "I can find help for my family"
- Social/Emotional Competence: "I help my child learn social skills"

They are designed for an interactive experience. Using the Guide for Professionals that accompanies each conversation guide, professionals can walk families through the process of selecting and adding content that applies to each family's unique circumstances and goals. All guides are provided in both English and Spanish and can be used one on one or in a group setting.

HOW TO USE THESE GUIDES

1. **Prepare for the conversation** by reviewing the content, reading the Guide for Professionals, and identifying some local resources to share with families who need them.

2. **Have the conversation in a calm environment.** Consider meeting parents and children at a local park, or take a walk with them on a nice day while you talk.

3. **Review key points with the caregiver,** using the Guide for Professionals that accompanies each conversation guide.

4. **Build on strengths.** Encourage caregivers to talk about what they know and are doing well.

5. **Encourage caregivers to consider other strategies** that they *could* use, *would like to* use, or *have seen others* use. Be sure to have the parents record those ideas in their own words, if they are able, to help them remember later.

6. **Ask them to try one new thing** in the coming week.

7. **Focus on the positive, but don't minimize real concerns.** Families' openness to these conversations will vary. Sometimes, overwhelming stressors will make it difficult to think beyond a present crisis. Address those concerns first.

These conversation guides are intended to stimulate thinking—not to represent all possible ways to discuss each factor. Feel free to adapt this approach and language to suit your community and caregivers' needs. Then, tell us about it by taking our survey at https://bit.ly/resourceguidesurvey. We would love to hear how you're using this information in your community!

PROTECTIVE FACTORS 101: RESOURCES FOR PROMOTING FAMILY WELL-BEING

childwelfare.gov/protectivefactors101/

Rain falls on every family, but protective factors can act like an umbrella to keep families strong even when life is challenging. Although the *2023/2024 Prevention Resource Guide* takes a "protective factors 201" approach, our tried and true protective factors 101 resources are still available:

- Topical tip sheets (in English and Spanish)
- Activity calendars (in English and Spanish)
- Interactive vignettes for use in training and community cafés
- Archived resource guides

We Love Each Other

GUIDE FOR PROFESSIONALS

Strong early bonds with caregivers build healthy brains. Nurturing and attachment with caring adults in early life is associated with better grades, healthier behaviors, stronger friendships, and an increased ability to cope with stress later in life.

Nurturing is important at all ages. Parents nurture their children as they grow by making time to listen to them, being involved and interested in their child's school and other activities, staying aware of their interests and friends, and being willing to advocate for their children and youth when necessary.

Trauma and stress can interfere with parents' ability to nurture their children. Daily or acute stressors, such as financial stress, family or community violence, past traumas, or caring for a child with special needs, can make taking time to focus on nurturing more challenging for some parents. They may need extra reassurance that showing their children love and affection makes a difference.

It is important to explore and acknowledge differences in how families show affection.

Key Points to Cover With Families

Showing love for your children matters *a lot*!	▪ **Ask:** *What gets in the way of nurturing?* ▪ Prompt for acute and/or daily stressors and challenging child behaviors. Talk about how children's ability to show affection can also affect parenting. ▪ **Ask:** *Did you know that the love you show for your children actually grows their brains and makes them smarter?* Little things every day add up.
Families show affection in different ways. A variety of factors—including how our own parents showed affection to us or didn't—can affect how we nurture our children.	▪ **Set the tone:** *I'm interested in learning how love and affection are expressed in your family.* ▪ Go through the list and ask parents to circle or check the ways they like to show affection to their children. ▪ Encourage parents to add other ways that aren't on the list.
Some days are easier than others.	▪ **Ask:** *What gets in the way of nurturing?* (Prompt for acute and/or daily stressors and challenging child behaviors.) ▪ **Ask:** *What do you do to care for yourself so that these things don't get in the way of showing the love you feel for your child?*
Children need nurturing every day.	▪ Encourage parents to write one thing on the calendar they could do each day to show their children how much they are loved.

More resources on nurturing and attachment can be found on the Child Welfare Information Gateway website.

We Love Each Other

CONVERSATION GUIDE

How I show my children love:

- ☐ Listen to their stories
- ☐ Say "I love you"
- ☐ Sing songs to them
- ☐ Snuggle, hug, or connect in other ways
- ☐ Make a meal or snack together
- ☐ Take walks or play outside together
- ☐ Do arts and crafts
- ☐ Play a game
- ☐ Talk about feelings
- ☐ Laugh about something silly
- ☐ Get to know their friends
- ☐ Ask them about their day
- ☐ Praise them and/or celebrate good news together
- ☐ Tell them what life was like when I was a kid
- ☐ Attend school or cultural events together
- ☐ Thank them for helping out
- ☐ Read together
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

How I will show my children love this week:

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday

Nos amamos unos a otros

GUÍA PARA PROFESIONALES

Los fuertes lazos tempranos con proveedores de cuidado construyen cerebros saludables. La crianza afectiva y el apego a adultos afectuosos en la vida temprana se asocian con mejores calificaciones, comportamientos más saludables, amistades más fuertes y una mayor capacidad para enfrentar el estrés en el futuro.

La crianza afectiva es importante en todas las edades. Los padres promueven el desarrollo de sus hijos al dedicarles tiempo y escucharlos, participar y mostrar interés en la escuela y actividades de sus hijos, estar al tanto de sus intereses y amigos, y estar dispuestos a abogar por sus hijos y jóvenes cuando sea necesario.

El trauma y el estrés pueden interferir con la capacidad de los padres para cuidar a sus hijos. Para algunos padres, los factores estresantes diarios o agudos (como estrés financiero, violencia familiar o comunitaria, traumas pasados o cuidar a un niño con necesidades especiales) pueden hacer que sea difícil enfocarse en la crianza afectiva. Pueden necesitar reconfirmación de que mostrarles amor y afecto a sus hijos marca una gran diferencia.

Es importante explorar y reconocer las diferencias en cómo las familias muestran afecto.

Puntos clave a tratar con las familias

¡Mostrar amor por sus hijos es *muy importante*!	▪ **Pregunte:** *¿Qué impide el cuidado afectuoso?* ▪ Pregunte sobre factores estresantes agudos o diarios y comportamientos difíciles de los niños. Explique que la capacidad de los niños para mostrar afecto también puede afectar cómo los padres crían a sus hijos. ▪ **Pregunte:** *¿Sabía que el amor que muestra por sus hijos en realidad hace crecer sus cerebros y los hace más inteligentes?* Las pequeñas cosas se acumulan todos los días.
Las familias muestran afecto de diferentes formas. Varios factores, incluyendo cómo nuestros propios padres nos demostraron o no el afecto, pueden afectar cómo criamos a nuestros hijos.	▪ **Establezca el tono:** *Me interesa saber cómo se expresan el amor y el afecto en su familia.* ▪ Repase la lista y pídales a los padres que marquen las formas en las que les gusta mostrar afecto a sus hijos. ▪ Anime a los padres a agregar otras formas que no están en la lista.
Algunos días son más fáciles que otros.	▪ **Pregunte:** *¿Qué impide el cuidado afectuoso?* (Pregunte sobre factores estresantes agudos o diarios y comportamientos difíciles de los niños). ▪ **Pregunte:** *¿Qué hace para cuidar de sí mismo para que estas cosas no le impidan mostrar el amor que siente por su hijo?*
Los niños necesitan cariño y afecto todos los días.	▪ Anime a los padres a escribir en el calendario una cosa que podrían hacer cada día para mostrarles a sus hijos cuánto los aman.

Puede encontrar más recursos acerca de la crianza afectiva y el apego (en inglés) en el sitio web de Child Welfare Information Gateway.

Nos amamos unos a otros

GUÍA DE CONVERSACIÓN

Cómo les muestro amor a mis hijos:

- ☐ Escuchar sus cuentos
- ☐ Decir "Te quiero"
- ☐ Cantarles canciones
- ☐ Acurrucarlos, abrazarlos o conectar con ellos de otra manera
- ☐ Hacer una merienda o comida juntos
- ☐ Caminar o jugar al aire libre juntos
- ☐ Hacer manualidades
- ☐ Jugar un juego
- ☐ Hablar sobre los sentimientos
- ☐ Reírnos juntos
- ☐ Conocer a sus amigos
- ☐ Preguntarles sobre su día
- ☐ Elogiarlos y / o celebrar buenas noticias juntos
- ☐ Contarles cómo era la vida cuando yo era niño
- ☐ Asistir juntos a eventos escolares o culturales
- ☐ Darles las gracias cuando ayudan
- ☐ Leer juntos
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

Cómo les mostraré a mis hijos el amor esta semana:

Domingo	Lunes	Martes	Miércoles	Jueves	Viernes	Sábado

I Can Choose What Works Best for My Children

GUIDE FOR PROFESSIONALS

Knowledge of parenting and child development is an important protective factor. Parents who understand the usual course of child development are more likely to provide their children with developmentally appropriate limits, consistent rules and expectations, and opportunities that promote independence.

No parent can be an expert on all aspects of child development or on the most effective ways to support a child at every age. As children grow, parents will need to continue to learn and respond to children's emerging needs.

Parenting styles need to be adjusted for each child's unique temperament and circumstances. Parents of children with special needs may benefit from additional coaching and support.

Key Points to Cover With Families

Children have reasons for behaving the way they do.	▪ Work with the parent to identify a challenging behavior they have seen recently. ▪ **Ask:** *What do you think your child is feeling or needing from you?*
Parenting is a tough job! Every parent has strategies that work and areas where they struggle.	▪ **Ask:** *What is going well with your child? What is not working as well?* ▪ This is an opportunity to explore the parent's perspective. ▪ If a strategy is harmful (e.g., spanking), suggest positive alternatives.
How we were parented affects our parenting.	▪ It is natural to parent our children the way our parents did or to try to avoid repeating our parents' mistakes. ▪ **Ask:** *How do you think the way you were parented influences your parenting decisions?*
No parent can know everything. All parents need advice at times.	▪ **Ask:** *Where do you go when you have questions about parenting?* (e.g., family, media, teachers, friends, books) ▪ Offer resources where they could get expert advice, such as parenting classes or online sources (e.g., CDC, Raising the Future, healthychildren.org, or Abriendo Puertas/Opening Doors).
It takes time to change habits, but it is never too late to try something new.	▪ Encourage parents to commit to one small change. ▪ **Ask:** *What do you think will work best for your child and family?*

More resources on knowledge of parenting and child development can be found on the Child Welfare Information Gateway website.

I Can Choose What Works Best for My Children

CONVERSATION GUIDE

Being a great parent is part natural and part learned. All parents face challenges and need advice along the way.

Child's Name: _____ **Challenging Behavior:** _____

What's Happening	▪ Why do I think my child behaves this way? ▪ What do I notice before this behavior occurs? ▪ What makes it better or worse?	
Current Strategy	▪ How do I handle this now? ▪ How is this working for us?	
My History	▪ How did my parents handle this behavior when I was a child? ▪ How did I respond? ▪ What do I like and dislike about their approach?	
Trusted Experts	▪ Who do I trust for parenting advice? ▪ How do they suggest I handle this behavior? ▪ What do I like and dislike about this approach?	
Things to Try	▪ What is the one thing I could try *before*, *during*, or *after* the behavior occurs? ▪ Where could I receive additional support, if I need it?	

Puedo elegir lo que funciona mejor para mis hijos

GUÍA PARA PROFESIONALES

Tener conocimientos sobre la crianza y el desarrollo de los niños es un factor de protección importante. Los padres que entienden el curso usual del desarrollo de los niños son más propensos a proporcionar a sus hijos límites apropiados para su desarrollo, reglas y expectativas consistentes y oportunidades que promuevan la independencia.

Ningún padre puede ser un experto en todos los aspectos del desarrollo de los niños o en las maneras más eficaces de apoyar a un niño en cada edad. A medida que los niños crecen, los padres necesitarán continuar aprendiendo y respondiendo a las necesidades cambiantes de los niños.

Los estilos de crianza necesitan ser ajustados según el temperamento y las circunstancias únicas de cada niño. Padres de niños con necesidades especiales pueden beneficiarse de ayuda y apoyo adicionales.

Puntos clave a tratar con las familias

Los niños tienen razones para comportarse de la manera que lo hacen.	▪ Trabaje con el padre para identificar un comportamiento difícil que ha visto recientemente. ▪ **Pregunte:** *¿Qué cree que su hijo está sintiendo o necesitando de usted?*
¡La crianza de hijos es un trabajo difícil! Todos los padres tienen estrategias que funcionan, como también áreas que les causan dificultades.	▪ **Pregunte:** *¿Qué está funcionando con su hijo? ¿Qué no está funcionando tan bien?* ▪ Esta es una oportunidad para explorar la perspectiva de los padres. ▪ Si una estrategia es dañina (por ejemplo, dar palmadas o nalgadas), sugiera alternativas positivas (enlace en inglés).
La forma en que fuimos criados afecta nuestra forma de criar.	▪ Es natural que criemos a nuestros hijos de la manera en que nuestros padres nos criaron, o de tratar de evitar repetir los errores de nuestros padres. ▪ **Pregunte:** *¿Cómo cree que la forma en que fue criado influye en sus decisiones de crianza?*
Ningún padre puede saberlo todo. Todos los padres necesitan consejos de vez en cuando.	▪ **Pregunte:** *¿A dónde acude cuando tiene preguntas sobre la crianza?* (por ejemplo, familiares, medios de comunicación, maestros, amigos, libros) ▪ Ofrezca recursos donde puedan recibir asesoramiento experto, como clases de crianza o fuentes en línea (por ejemplo, los CDC, healthychildren.org en español o Abriendo Puertas/Opening Doors).
Se necesita tiempo para cambiar los hábitos, pero nunca es demasiado tarde para probar algo nuevo.	▪ Anime a los padres a comprometerse a hacer un cambio pequeño. ▪ **Pregunte:** *¿Qué cree que funcionará mejor para su hijo y familia?*

Puede encontrar más recursos acerca de conocimientos sobre la crianza y el desarrollo de los niños (en inglés) en el sitio web de Child Welfare Information Gateway.

Puedo elegir lo que funciona mejor para mis hijos

GUÍA DE CONVERSACIÓN

Ser un gran padre es en parte natural y en parte aprendido. Todos los padres enfrentan desafíos y necesitan consejos de vez en cuando.

Nombre del niño: _____ **Comportamiento difícil:** _____

Qué está sucediendo	▪ ¿Por qué creo que mi hijo se comporta así? ▪ ¿Qué noto antes de que ocurra este comportamiento? ▪ ¿Qué hace que empeore o mejore el comportamiento?	
Estrategia actual	▪ ¿Cómo manejo esto actualmente? ▪ ¿Cómo nos está funcionando esta estrategia?	
Mi historia	▪ ¿Cómo manejaban mis padres este comportamiento cuando yo era un niño? ▪ ¿Cómo respondía yo? ▪ ¿Qué me gusta y qué no me gusta de su estrategia?	
Expertos de confianza	▪ ¿En quién confío para pedir consejos de crianza? ▪ ¿Cómo sugieren ellos que maneje este comportamiento? ▪ ¿Qué me gusta y qué no me gusta de esta estrategia?	
Cosas para probar	▪ ¿Qué es una cosa que podría probar *antes*, *durante* o *después* de que ocurra el comportamiento? ▪ ¿Dónde podría encontrar apoyo adicional, si lo necesito?	

I Deserve Self-Care

GUIDE FOR PROFESSIONALS

Resilience is the flexibility and inner strength to bounce back when things are not going well. Parents with resilience are better able to protect their children from stress and can help children learn critical self-regulation and problem-solving skills.

All parents have strengths and resources that can serve as a foundation for building their resilience. These may include faith, flexibility, humor, communication, problem-solving, caring relationships, or the ability to identify and access needed services.

Self-care is important, but it is only part of the picture. Families experiencing multiple life stressors—such as a history of trauma, health concerns, marital conflict, substance use, or community violence—and financial stressors—such as unemployment, financial insecurity, or homelessness—face more challenges coping effectively with typical day-to-day stresses of raising children.

Addressing stressors in the family, community, and society will ultimately create stronger, more resilient families.

Key Points to Cover With Families

Parenting is stressful, and some situations are more difficult than others. Too much stress can make it harder to parent effectively.	▪ **Ask:** *What do you notice when you are under a lot of stress? How is your parenting affected when you are stressed?* ▪ Share some common effects of stress—such as changes in eating or sleeping habits or feelings of depression or hopelessness—if they are having trouble coming up with ideas.
Stress affects children, too.	▪ Talk with caregivers about how children can pick up on family stress and show many of the same signs. ▪ **Ask:** *How can you tell when your child is feeling stressed?*
Everyone has strengths that they draw on during difficult times.	▪ **Ask:** *What kinds of things do you do to take care of yourself and manage stress?* ▪ Encourage them to circle items on the guide or write their own answers in the category where they fit. ▪ Then, prompt caregivers to think of and record other self-care strategies that they could use, would like to use, or have seen others use. ▪ **Ask:** *What is one new self-care activity you can commit to this week?*

More resources on building parental resilience can be found on the Child Welfare Information Gateway website. The National Parent Helpline may also be a valuable resource for families.

I Deserve Self-Care

CONVERSATION GUIDE

When I am feeling stressed, I can:

Mind

- ☐ Watch something that makes me laugh
- ☐ Write down my thoughts
- ☐ Do something creative (draw, work on a puzzle, sing, etc.)
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

Spirit

- ☐ Spend time outdoors
- ☐ Meditate or pray
- ☐ Connect with my faith community (church, mosque, temple, etc.)
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

Body

- ☐ Have a cup of coffee or tea
- ☐ Take a nap
- ☐ Walk, stretch, or exercise
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

Community

- ☐ Play a game with my children
- ☐ Spend time with family or friends
- ☐ Connect to my local parent-teacher association or other support group
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

One thing I will do this week to care for myself is ...

Me merezco el autocuidado

GUÍA PARA PROFESIONALES

La resiliencia es la flexibilidad y la fuerza interna para recuperarse cuando las cosas no van bien. Los padres con resiliencia tienen más capacidad para proteger a sus hijos del estrés y pueden ayudarlos a aprender habilidades esenciales de autorregulación y resolución de problemas.

Todos los padres tienen fortalezas y recursos que pueden servir como base para desarrollar su resiliencia. Estos pueden incluir su fe, flexibilidad, humor, comunicación, capacidad para resolver problemas, relaciones afectuosas o su capacidad para identificar y acceder a los servicios necesarios.

El autocuidado (cuidar de sí mismo) es importante, pero es solo una parte del panorama. Las familias con múltiples factores de vida estresantes (como un historial de trauma, problemas de salud, conflictos matrimoniales, uso de sustancias o violencia comunitaria) y factores estresantes financieros (como el desempleo, la inseguridad financiera o la falta de hogar) enfrentan más dificultades para lidiar de manera efectiva con el estrés típico de criar hijos.

Abordar los factores estresantes en la familia, comunidad y sociedad creará familias más fuertes y resilientes.

Puntos clave a tratar con las familias

La crianza de los hijos es estresante, y algunas situaciones son más difíciles que otras. Demasiado estrés puede dificultar la crianza efectiva.	▪ **Pregunte:** *¿Qué nota cuando está muy estresado? ¿Cómo se ve afectada la manera en que cría a sus hijos cuando está estresado?* ▪ Mencione algunos ejemplos de efectos comunes del estrés (como cambios en los hábitos alimenticios o de sueño, o sentimientos de depresión o desesperanza) si les cuesta pensar en ideas.
El estrés también afecta a los niños.	▪ Hable con los proveedores de cuidado sobre el hecho de que los niños pueden detectar el estrés de su familia y mostrar muchos de los mismos signos. ▪ **Pregunte:** *¿Cómo sabe cuándo su hijo se siente estresado?*
Todas las personas tienen fortalezas a las que recurren en tiempos difíciles.	▪ **Pregunte:** *¿Qué tipo de cosas hace para cuidarse a sí mismo y manejar el estrés?* ▪ Anime a los proveedores de cuidado a que encierren en un círculo los elementos en la guía o que escriban sus respuestas en la categoría correspondiente. ▪ Luego, pídales que piensen en y anoten otras estrategias de autocuidado que podrían usar, les gustaría usar, o han visto a otros usar. ▪ **Pregunte:** *¿Cuál es una nueva actividad de autocuidado que puede comprometerse a hacer esta semana?*

Puede encontrar más recursos acerca de la resiliencia parental (en inglés) en el sitio web de Child Welfare Information Gateway. El National Parent Helpline (en inglés), incluyendo sus recursos en español, también puede ser un buen recurso para familias.

Me merezco el autocuidado

GUÍA DE CONVERSACIÓN

Cuando me siento estresado, puedo:

Mente

- ☐ Mirar algo que me hace reír
- ☐ Anotar mis pensamientos
- ☐ Hacer algo creativo (dibujar, hacer un rompecabezas, cantar, etc.)
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

Espíritu

- ☐ Pasar tiempo al aire libre
- ☐ Meditar o rezar
- ☐ Conectarme con mi comunidad de fe (iglesia, mezquita, templo, etc.)
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

Cuerpo

- ☐ Tomar una taza de café o té
- ☐ Tomar una siesta
- ☐ Caminar, hacer estiramientos o ejercicio
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

Comunidad

- ☐ Jugar un juego con mis hijos
- ☐ Pasar tiempo con mi familia o amigos
- ☐ Conectarme a mi asociación local de padres y maestros u otro grupo de apoyo
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

Una cosa que haré esta semana para cuidarme es ...

We Are Connected

GUIDE FOR PROFESSIONALS

All parents need emotional support. Social connections (supportive friends, family, neighbors, and community groups) help parents care for their children and themselves.

Social connections support children in multiple ways. A parent's positive relationships give children access to other caring adults, model important relational skills, and increase the likelihood that children will benefit from involvement in positive activities.

Building positive relationships may require extra effort for some families—including those who are new to a community, recently divorced, or first-time parents. Additionally, some parents may need to develop self-confidence and social skills before they can expand their social networks.

Key Points to Cover With Families

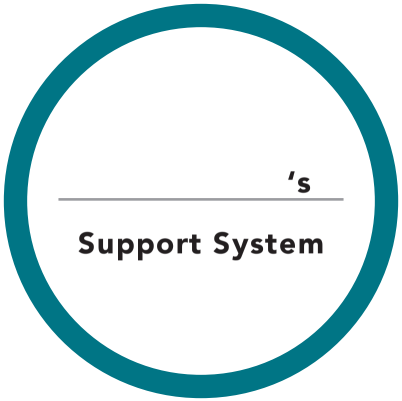
All parents need support sometimes.	▪ Explain that this conversation guide is a tool to help the parent "map" their sources of social support. ▪ Emphasize that there is no wrong way to complete this worksheet. ▪ Have the caregiver put their name or family name in the center circle.
Support can come from family, friends, neighbors, or other helpful people.	▪ **Ask:** *Who are the people in your circle of support?* ▪ If needed, prompt for names of friends, family, neighbors, and helping professionals. ▪ Add their names in circles or other shapes around the center circle of the ecomap.
Social support can be found by belonging to groups.	▪ **Ask:** *What groups or organizations are part of your family's life?* (e.g., faith communities, schools, workplaces, community centers) ▪ Add them in the circles where they belong.
Not all connections are equally supportive.	▪ **Ask:** *How well do each of these connections support you as a parent?* ▪ Invite the caregiver to show differences with different colors, solid vs. dotted lines, or arrows indicating which direction(s) support flows. ▪ **Ask:** *Looking at this map, what do you notice about the connections in your life?* ▪ It may be important to take some time to help caregivers process their feelings about the current amount of social support in their life.
Making new connections can be challenging, but it is possible.	▪ **Ask:** *Would you like to have more support? How do you go about making new connections? What are the challenges?* ▪ **Ask:** *What is one thing you can commit to doing this week to strengthen your social connections?*

More resources on building social connections can be found on the Child Welfare Information Gateway website.

We Are Connected

CONVERSATION GUIDE

All families need support. Connecting with others helps to build a strong support system.



One thing I will do this week to strengthen my connection to others is:

Estamos conectados

GUÍA PARA PROFESIONALES

Todos los padres necesitan apoyo emocional. Las conexiones sociales (amigos de apoyo, familiares, vecinos y grupos comunitarios) ayudan a los padres a cuidar de sus hijos y de sí mismos.

Las conexiones sociales apoyan a los niños de varias maneras. Las relaciones positivas de los padres con otras personas dan a los niños acceso a otros adultos que se preocupan por ellos, modelan habilidades relacionales importantes y aumentan la probabilidad de que los niños se beneficien de la participación en actividades positivas.

La creación de relaciones positivas puede requerir un esfuerzo adicional para algunas familias, incluidas familias que son nuevas en una comunidad, familias recientemente divorciadas o padres primerizos. Algunos padres pueden necesitar desarrollar su confianza en sí mismos y sus habilidades sociales antes de poder expandir sus redes sociales.

Puntos clave a tratar con las familias

Todos los padres necesitan apoyo de vez en cuando.	▪ Explique que esta guía de conversación es una herramienta para ayudar a los padres a identificar sus fuentes de apoyo social. ▪ Enfatice que no hay una manera incorrecta de completar esta hoja de trabajo. ▪ Pídale al proveedor de cuidado que ponga su nombre o apellido en el círculo central.
El apoyo puede provenir de familiares, amigos, vecinos u otras personas.	▪ **Pregunte:** *¿Quiénes son las personas en su círculo de apoyo?* ▪ Si es necesario, solicite nombres de amigos, familiares, vecinos y profesionales. ▪ Anote los nombres dentro de círculos u otras formas alrededor del círculo central del diagrama o "ecomap" (enlace en inglés).
El apoyo social se puede encontrar uniéndose a grupos.	▪ **Pregunte:** *¿Qué grupos u organizaciones forman parte de la vida de su familia?* (por ejemplo, comunidades de fe, escuelas, lugares de trabajo, centros comunitarios) ▪ Añádalos en círculos donde pertenecen.
No todas las conexiones ofrecen el mismo nivel de apoyo.	▪ **Pregunte:** *¿Qué tan bien le apoyan cada una de estas conexiones como padre?* ▪ Invite al proveedor de cuidado a mostrar diferencias usando colores, líneas sólidas o punteadas o flechas indicando en qué dirección(es) fluye el apoyo que recibe. ▪ **Pregunte:** *Mirando este diagrama, ¿qué nota sobre las conexiones en su vida?* ▪ Puede ser importante tomar tiempo para ayudar al proveedor de cuidado a procesar sus sentimientos acerca de la cantidad actual de apoyo social en su vida.
Hacer nuevas conexiones puede ser difícil, pero sí es posible.	▪ **Pregunte:** *¿Le gustaría tener más apoyo? ¿Qué hace usted para formar nuevas conexiones? ¿Cuáles son los desafíos?* ▪ **Pregunte:** *¿Qué es una cosa que puede comprometerse a hacer esta semana para fortalecer sus conexiones sociales?*

Puede encontrar más recursos acerca de la creación de conexiones sociales (en inglés) en el sitio web Child Welfare Information Gateway.

Estamos conectados

GUÍA DE CONVERSACIÓN

Todas las familias necesitan apoyo. La conexión con otras personas ayuda a crear un sistema de apoyo fuerte.

Una cosa que haré esta semana para fortalecer mi conexión a otras personas es:

I Can Find Help for My Family

GUIDE FOR PROFESSIONALS

Caregivers whose concrete needs are met have more time and energy to devote to their children's safety and well-being. When families do not have steady financial resources, lack a stable living situation, or cannot afford food or health care, their ability to support their children's healthy development may be at risk. Partnering with parents to identify and access resources in the community helps them protect and care for their children.

Caregivers may need more than just a phone number. Consider providing support during initial calls, introducing them directly to a personal contact, or otherwise offering a warm hand-off to a fellow service provider. Be sure to refer families to providers who speak their language, are culturally competent, and are committed to equity.

Key Points to Cover With Families

All families need help sometimes.	▪ **Ask:** *Can you think of a time when you asked for help in the past?* (For example, when they connected with your organization.) ▪ Point out how brave they were to accept help and ask what made that experience successful for them.
Unmet basic needs like nutritious food and safe, stable housing can be harmful to children's development and ability to learn.	▪ Review the basic needs in the first column of the conversation guide. Talk with the family about other needs not mentioned in that list. Add those to the empty row(s) in their own words. ▪ In column 2, ask parents to circle the response that best fits their family for each need.
There are many places to go for help in our community. They include government agencies, as well as nonprofit organizations and faith communities.	▪ In column 3, give caregivers as many options as possible so they can choose what is right for their own families. ▪ **Ask:** *What is one small step you can take this week?*

More resources on concrete supports can be found on the Child Welfare Information Gateway Information Gateway website.

Consider: What resources are available in your area to help caregivers meet their families' basic needs for food, safe housing, transportation, child care, health care, and employment?

One simple way to learn more about local organizations that support families is by calling 2-1-1. (Visit the 211 website to ensure availability of this service in your area.)

I Can Find Help for My Family

CONVERSATION GUIDE

Help is available in our community.

These things are important for my family...	This is true for my family...	A place I can go for help if I need it is...
My family has enough to eat.	☐ Always ☐ Sometimes ☐ Never	
My family has a safe place to live.	☐ Always ☐ Sometimes ☐ Never	
My family can get to work and school on time.	☐ Always ☐ Sometimes ☐ Never	
My children have a safe place to go when I can't be with them.	☐ Always ☐ Sometimes ☐ Never	
My family has the medical care we need.	☐ Always ☐ Sometimes ☐ Never	
I have regular work that pays enough to meet my family's needs.	☐ Always ☐ Sometimes ☐ Never	
	☐ Always ☐ Sometimes ☐ Never	
	☐ Always ☐ Sometimes ☐ Never	

Help may be just a phone call away!

2-1-1 is a service that connects people all over the country with helpful services where they live.

Puedo encontrar ayuda para mi familia

GUÍA PARA PROFESIONALES

Los proveedores de cuidado cuyas necesidades concretas están satisfechas tienen más tiempo y energía para dedicar a la seguridad y el bienestar de sus hijos. Cuando las familias no tienen recursos financieros constantes, carecen de una situación de vivienda estable o no tienen los medios para comprar alimentos o pagar por atención médica, su capacidad para apoyar el desarrollo saludable de sus hijos puede estar en riesgo. Trabajar junto a los padres para identificar y acceder a recursos en la comunidad les ayuda a proteger y cuidar a sus hijos.

Los proveedores de cuidado pueden necesitar más que solo un número de teléfono. Considere brindar asistencia durante las llamadas iniciales o presentarles directamente a un colega proveedor de servicios. Asegúrese de referir a las familias a proveedores que hablen su idioma, sean culturalmente competentes y estén comprometidos con la equidad.

Puntos clave a tratar con las familias

Todas las familias necesitan ayuda de vez en cuando.	▪ **Pregunte:** *¿Puede pensar en una ocasión en la que pidió ayuda en el pasado?* (por ejemplo, cuando se conectaron con su organización) ▪ Señale cuán valientes fueron para aceptar ayuda y pregúnteles qué hizo que esa experiencia fuera exitosa para ellos.
Las necesidades básicas no satisfechas, como alimentos nutritivos y viviendas seguras y estables, pueden ser perjudiciales para el desarrollo y la capacidad de aprendizaje de los niños.	▪ Revise las necesidades básicas en la columna 1 de la guía de conversación. Hable con la familia sobre otras necesidades no mencionadas en esa lista. Anote esas necesidades en las filas vacías. ▪ En la columna 2, pídales a los padres que encierren con un círculo la respuesta que mejor refleja a su familia para cada necesidad.
Hay muchos lugares para buscar ayuda en nuestra comunidad. Estos incluyen agencias gubernamentales, organizaciones sin fines de lucro y comunidades religiosas.	▪ En la columna 3, ofrézcales a los proveedores de cuidado tantas opciones como sea posible para que puedan elegir lo que es mejor para sus propias familias. ▪ **Pregunte:** *¿Cuál es un pequeño paso que puede tomar esta semana?*

Puede encontrar más recursos acerca de apoyos concretos (en inglés) en el sitio web de Child Welfare Information Gateway.

Considere: ¿Qué recursos están disponibles en su área para ayudar a los proveedores de cuidado a satisfacer las necesidades básicas de sus familias (alimento, vivienda, transporte, cuidado para los niños, cuidados médicos, empleo)?

Puede aprender más sobre las organizaciones locales que apoyan a las familias llamando al 2-1-1. (Visite el sitio web de 211 [en inglés] para asegurarse de la disponibilidad de este servicio en su área).

Puedo encontrar ayuda para mi familia

GUÍA DE CONVERSACIÓN

La ayuda está disponible en nuestra comunidad.

Estas cosas son importantes para mi familia...	Esto es cierto para mi familia...	Un lugar donde puedo buscar ayuda si la necesito es...
Mi familia tiene suficiente para comer.	☐ Siempre ☐ Algunas veces ☐ Nunca	
Mi familia tiene un lugar seguro para vivir.	☐ Siempre ☐ Algunas veces ☐ Nunca	
Mi familia puede llegar al trabajo y a la escuela a tiempo.	☐ Siempre ☐ Algunas veces ☐ Nunca	
Mis hijos tienen un lugar seguro para ir cuando no puedo estar con ellos.	☐ Siempre ☐ Algunas veces ☐ Nunca	
Mi familia tiene la atención médica que necesitamos.	☐ Siempre ☐ Algunas veces ☐ Nunca	
Tengo un trabajo regular que paga lo suficiente para satisfacer las necesidades de mi familia.	☐ Siempre ☐ Algunas veces ☐ Nunca	
	☐ Siempre ☐ Algunas veces ☐ Nunca	
	☐ Siempre ☐ Algunas veces ☐ Nunca	

¡La ayuda puede estar a solo una llamada de distancia!

2-1-1 (en inglés) es un servicio que conecta a personas de todo el país con los servicios donde viven.

I Help My Child Learn Social Skills

GUIDE FOR PROFESSIONALS

Children who exhibit social and emotional competence are likely to have better relationships and greater resilience to stress as adults. Social and emotional competence refers to children's ability to form bonds and interact positively with others, self-regulate their emotions and behavior, communicate their feelings, and solve problems effectively.

Helping children to develop these skills can result in stronger parent-child relationships that are mutually rewarding. Parents grow more responsive to children's needs—and less likely to feel stressed or frustrated—as children learn to say what they need, rather than "acting out" difficult feelings.

Children's delays in social-emotional development can create extra stress for families. It is important to identify any such concerns as early as possible and to provide services to children and their parents that facilitate healthy development.

Key Points to Cover With Families

Social skills are important for children to become successful adults. Social skills are defined and prioritized a little differently for each unique family and community.	▪ Give some examples of social skills, such as taking turns, sharing, or using manners. ▪ **Ask:** *Which social skills are most important in your family/community/culture? Why?*
Children and youth develop social skills gradually. Share some information about social skills that they might expect to see at their children's current ages.	▪ Help the parent connect important social skills with typical child development. (For example, *I hear you saying that sharing is really important to you. Most children develop the ability to share their toys around age 5.*) ▪ **Ask:** *Which of these skills do you see your child doing well? Which would you like to help them improve?*
Our children learn by watching us.	▪ **Ask:** *What are some situations where your child might see you using [chosen skill]?* ▪ For example, how does the caregiver use this skill with their coparent, family members, or friends?
Parents can help their children learn social skills. One great way to teach children is by "catching them" doing something well.	▪ **Ask:** *When have you seen your child do [action/behavior] well recently? How do you let your child know you like what they're doing?* ▪ **Ask:** *How else could you encourage this skill?*

More resources on building social and emotional competence of children can be found on the Child Welfare Information Gateway website.

I Help My Child Learn Social Skills

CONVERSATION GUIDE

Children with strong social skills get along better with others. You are your child's first and most important teacher.

One social skill I would like to help my child improve:

I show my child these skills when I:

I encourage this skill by:

- ☐ Praising them when they do this well
- ☐ Reading books about emotions and/or social situations
- ☐ Pointing out when characters on TV use the skill
- ☐ Naming feelings (my own and/or my child's)
- ☐ Setting up play dates for practice
- ☐ Celebrating my child's unique self
- ☐ Teaching my child about his or her cultural identity
- ☐ Talking about and celebrating differences
- ☐ Having a "no technology" day
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

One thing I will do this week to encourage social skills:

Ayudo a mi hijo a aprender habilidades sociales

GUÍA PARA PROFESIONALES

Los niños que muestran capacidades sociales y emocionales son propensos a tener mejores relaciones y una mayor resiliencia al estrés como adultos. "Capacidad social y emocional" se refiere a la capacidad de los niños para formar vínculos e interactuar positivamente con otras personas, regular sus propias emociones y comportamientos, comunicar sus sentimientos y resolver problemas eficazmente.

Ayudar a los niños a desarrollar estas habilidades puede resultar en relaciones más fuertes y enriquecedoras entre padres e hijos. Los padres pueden responder mejor a las necesidades de los niños (y sentirse menos estresados y frustrados) a medida que los niños aprenden a expresar sus necesidades, en vez de "portarse mal" para expresar sentimientos difíciles.

Los retrasos en el desarrollo social y emocional de los niños pueden crear estrés adicional para las familias. Es importante identificar tales preocupaciones lo antes posible y proporcionar servicios a los niños y sus padres que faciliten un desarrollo saludable.

Puntos clave a tratar con las familias

Las habilidades sociales son importantes para que los niños se conviertan en adultos exitosos. Estas habilidades se definen y priorizan de manera diferente para cada familia y comunidad.	▪ Dé algunos ejemplos de habilidades sociales, como esperar su turno, compartir con los demás o usar buenos modales. ▪ **Pregunte:** *¿Cuáles habilidades sociales son más importantes en su familia, comunidad y cultura? ¿Por qué?*
Los niños y jóvenes desarrollan habilidades sociales gradualmente. Comparta información sobre las habilidades sociales que podrían esperar ver según las edades actuales de sus hijos.	▪ Ayude a los padres a conectar habilidades sociales con el desarrollo típico de un niño. (Por ejemplo, *Le escuché decir que para usted es importante que su hijo sepa compartir. La mayoría de los niños desarrollan la capacidad de compartir sus juguetes alrededor de los 5 años*). ▪ **Pregunte:** *¿Cuáles de estas habilidades cree que su hijo hace bien? ¿Cuáles le gustaría ayudarle a su hijo a mejorar?*
Nuestros hijos aprenden mirándonos.	▪ **Pregunte:** *¿Cuáles son algunas situaciones en las que su hijo podría verlo a usted modelando [habilidad elegida]?* ▪ Por ejemplo, ¿cómo usa el proveedor de cuidado esta habilidad con su pareja, familiares o amigos?
Los padres pueden ayudar a sus hijos a aprender habilidades sociales. Una excelente manera de enseñar a los niños es "pillándolos" haciendo algo bien.	▪ **Pregunte:** *¿Cuándo ha visto a su hijo hacer [acción o comportamiento] bien recientemente? ¿Cómo le hace saber a su hijo que le gusta lo que está haciendo?* ▪ **Pregunte:** *¿De qué otra manera podría fomentar esta habilidad?*

Puede encontrar más recursos acerca de la creación de capacidades sociales y emocionales en los niños (en inglés) en el sitio web de Child Welfare Information Gateway.

Ayudo a mi hijo a aprender habilidades sociales

GUÍA DE CONVERSACIÓN

Los niños con fuertes habilidades sociales se llevan mejor con los demás. Usted es el primer y más importante maestro de su hijo.

Una habilidad social que me gustaría ayudar a mi hijo a mejorar:

Le muestro a mi hijo estas habilidades cuando:

Fomento esta habilidad:

- ☐ Felicitando a mi hijo cuando la hacen bien.
- ☐ Leyendo libros sobre emociones y / o situaciones sociales
- ☐ Señalando cuando los personajes de la televisión usan la habilidad
- ☐ Nombrando los sentimientos (los míos y / o los de mi hijo)
- ☐ Programando citas para jugar con otros niños para practicar
- ☐ Celebrando a mi hijo como persona única
- ☐ Enseñando a mi hijo sobre su identidad cultural
- ☐ Hablando sobre y celebrando las diferencias
- ☐ Teniendo un día “sin tecnología”
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

Una cosa que haré esta semana para fomentar las habilidades sociales:

CHAPTER SEVEN

Partners and Resources

Like the work of building strong families and communities, the Prevention Resource Guide is a collective effort. The resources featured here represent the efforts of many National Prevention Partners, Federal agencies, community-based organizations, and parents committed to strengthening families and communities. We list many of those committed people and organizations by name on the pages that follow. We also recognize the countless unnamed others who are doing this work tirelessly on the ground in their own families and communities.

We can do more, together.

NATIONAL CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION PARTNERS

The National Child Abuse Prevention Partners are national organizations that work to promote well-being in children, families, and communities. More information about each organization, including contact information, is available on the Information Gateway website.

FEDERAL INTER-AGENCY WORK GROUP ON CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

The Office on Child Abuse and Neglect within the Children's Bureau leads and coordinates the Federal Inter-Agency Work Group on Child Abuse and Neglect. Information about the workgroup and its members, including contact information, can be found on the Children's Bureau website.

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April Is National Child Abuse Prevention Month

childwelfare.gov/preventionmonth

The Prevention Resource Guide is only the beginning. Visit the National Child Abuse Prevention Month website for additional information and resources.

Join the Campaign

Help families thrive by connecting your community to key resources and information. Find free graphics, engaging social media posts, and more to help spread the word!

Access Resources on the Go

Use the Prevention Resource Guide anytime, anywhere. Print and share the Protective Factors Conversation Guides or download a digital version of the entire guide!

Stay Connected

Find out what's new by signing up for email updates on the website, and follow @childwelfare on Facebook and @childwelfaregov on Twitter.

Give Us Your Feedback

Let us know how you are using this year's Prevention Resource Guide and provide feedback on the overall campaign by completing a brief survey.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Administration for Children and Families
Administration on Children, Youth and Families
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www.acf.hhs.gov/cb

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